An intimate and revealing account of the people and nature of the great forest of Central Africa.

MY CHILDREN OF THE FOREST

By

ANDREW F. HENSEY

MEMBER OF THE BELGIAN ROYAL COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE NATIVES. MISSIONARY OF THE UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY. INTRODUCTION BY PRESIDENT CHARLES T. PAUL OF THE COLLEGE OF MISSIONS.

A rarely informing book on the Congo region of Central Africa. The reader will find here the romance of the black people and the fascination of the great tropical forest in full measure. The author writes from an experience of sixteen years residence as a missionary, and an official connection with the Belgian Royal Commission for the Protection of the Natives. President Charles T. Paul says in his introduction: "Thousands who have been thrilled by the author's recital of his experiences will be grateful for these chapters. This tale of primitive life is told from the heart with unembellished spontaneity. It has the fine reality and the fascination of romance."

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MY CHILDREN OF THE FOREST

ANDREW F. HENSEY

LONJATAKA, CHIEF OF MONIEKA.

MY CHILDREN OF THE FOREST

BY

ANDREW F. HENSEY

MEMBER OF THE BELGIAN ROYAL COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE NATIVES

AUTHOR OF

"Opals from Africa," "A Master-Builder on the Congo"

With an Introduction by

PRESIDENT CHARLES T. PAUL

OF THE COLLEGE OF MISSIONS

NEW YORK

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MY CHILDREN OF THE FOREST
— A —
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To the Memory of

MY MISSIONARY GODMOTHER

MRS. EBEN BRIGGS THOMAS

AND TO

EUCLID AVENUE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

CLEVELAND, OHIO

WHOSE LIVING-LINK MISSIONARY I HAVE BEEN SINCE SEPTEMBER, 1905

This Book Is Dedicated
in Affectionate Gratitude

INTRODUCTION

By Charles T. Paul
PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE OF MISSIONS

> The inner life of the forest reveals itself to those who linger lovingly amidst its shadows.
> —W. C. Willoughby.

The author of this book not only so lingered but labored for 16 years as a missionary of the Disciples of Christ, among the Bantus of Belgian Africa, with headquarters at Bolenge—nearly a thousand miles up the Congo River. He still holds appointment under the United Christian Missionary Society, of St. Louis. Since 1921 he has been Professor of African Missions and Lunkundo at the College of Missions in Indianapolis.

In 1918 King Albert made him a member for life of *La Commission pour la Protection des Indigènes.* Only one other Protestant was empowered, with a select group of government officials, merchants and Roman bishops, to study and promote the welfare of the Congo tribes, reporting biennially to the King. This sovereign recognition of Mr. Hensey's devotion to the native peoples was but a faint reflection of the fame he had already won among them as their white father and friend.

To whom, indeed, should "the inner life of the forest reveal itself" if not to one who has ministered to its sorrows, mastered its speech, given it the Gospel and brought within its shadows the beginnings of Christian literature and civilization?

Mr. Hensey was chairman of the committee of four who turned the New Testament into Lunkundo-Lomongo, allied languages of four Congo districts. He has travelled widely in Africa, penetrated far up

the Ubangi, and into remote villages beyond the Juapa, in quest of his Bantu brother—him with

> "The emptiness of ages on his face,
> And on his back the burden of the world."

"Why do white men who devote their lives to the welfare of the African people do so?" inquires Sir Sidney Oliver. And he answers: "It is because those who have to do disinterestedly with the negroid races come to love them—find them above the average rich and responsive and sympathetic in some of the most characteristic and delicate qualities of essential human nature." *

In this book it is the missionary rather than the professor who speaks. Mr. Hensey might have given us an anthropological treatise, cumbered with technical erudition about the Bantus. That may follow. But these pages are innocent of even one learned quotation, or a footnote, or a foreign phrase of any kind—except some snatches of Lunkundo, rippling like liquid music among the trees. Thousands who have been thrilled by the author's recital of his experiences will be grateful that the present chapters have preserved the simplicity and directness of the spoken form. This is a tale of the primitive, told from the heart—with the same unembellished spontaneity that has fascinated alike the dusky Congolese squatting around a jungle fire, and the cultured Christians of America. It has the ring of reality and the fascination of romance. "My Children of the Forest" will take its place with Donald Fraser's "Winning a Primitive People" and Jean Mackenzie's "Black Sheep." Better still—it is another ivory box of Andrew F. Hensey's "Opals from Africa."

C. T. P.

Indianapolis.

* Africa: Slave or Free? p. XI.

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NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

It should be borne in mind that the vowels in Lonkundo are pronounced as in Latin, and the consonants as in English, except that *c* is always *ch,* and the *g* hard. When a word commences with an *m* followed by a consonant, the *m* is pronounced with the lips closed; when a word commences with an *n* followed by a consonant, the *n* is pronounced with the tongue at the roof of the mouth. *ö* is pronounced like *a* in awful.

An even stress is laid on all syllables.

MY CHILDREN OF THE FOREST

Prologue

ONE night we gathered in a little meeting for young people at Bolenge. It was held in a low, thatch-covered church. For illumination there were only one or two smoking lanterns, and in that dim light one could hardly see the dusky faces of those who gathered. One after another they arose to speak, just as the young people do here in their meetings, and finally one girl who had been baptized the Sunday before stood up to make her first talk.

Very timidly Inkondo had this to say: "Whenever we read in the New Testament of Jesus going about healing diseases, I always like to remember that He never found a disease which He could not cure. And so it makes us glad, for we know that, no matter how sinful we people of Africa are, Jesus can always save us."

Through many years those words cling to my memory. For Inkondo's creed is mine. Jesus Christ is able to solve every one of Africa's problems. In that simple philosophy of life these chapters—a real labor of love—have been prepared. Nearly all of them were given as public addresses, and reported stenographically, which accounts for much in their form. Some

of the material in my little book, "Opals from Africa," published in 1910, is included herein.

No missionary's name appears in these pages, though they are a tribute to scores of them—my comrades and friends in many missions. This volume has to do almost exclusively with the life of "My Children of the Forest," as it was Yesterday; as it is Today, since The Life came; and as it is to be Tomorrow. For always and ever *life* has been the *light* of men.

> "In Him was Life; and the Life was
> the Light of Men."

Confident in that trust, we hail Africa's Tomorrow.

> "Great duties are before us, and great songs,
> And whether crowned or crownless when we fall,
> It matters not, so God's work be done."

CHAPTER I

A Square Deal for Africa

ONE day a chief from the far Ubangi region came to visit our mission station. He came up on the veranda of our house with a number of the elders of his village and several of his wives. After we had exchanged greetings, he giving me the greeting due a chief of high rank, and I giving him the one due his rank, he said to me: "White Man, some of your evangelists have been in our village, and they have been telling us the Jesus story and all about the Words of God, which we have found very interesting. Now, we have seen some government white men going up our river, and we have seen some trading white men also, but we have never seen a Jesus white man, and we thought we would like to come over here and see what a Jesus white man was like, so here we are. Yesterday we heard you preach, and now we want you to show us all the wisdom of your land of the white people, because we know you are very wise."

I explained to him that it would not be possible to show him *all* of our wisdom, because we had not brought all of it with us, but that we would show him a little of it. I happened to think that the thing he would probably like best to see and hear would be a phonograph, and that it would impress him with the white man's wisdom. So I started to take him into

the next room, but on the threshold he stopped to look in, and saw on the opposite wall a full length mirror. (I might explain that we have lady missionaries out there!) As soon as he saw the mirror, he stopped short and said: "White Man, who is that?" He had a long spear in his hand, the sign of his rank as a mature warrior, so I said to him: "Shake your spear, and see who that is." He drew back his spear as if he were going to stab someone, and the man in the mirror did the same thing. And he looked more puzzled than ever. He said: "Here, White Man, hold my spear." He had a knife in a wooden sheath at his side, and he drew it out quickly, as if he were going to start something. Naturally, the man in the mirror drew his knife and decided to start something also. He said: "White Man, let's go over to one of the other houses." I replied: "You are afraid, aren't you?" This is a deadly insult in that land of warriors. "White Man, don't you dare to say I am afraid." "Then why do you not want to stay here?" "Well, there is probably more wisdom in one of the other houses than there is in this one." But the real trouble was that the chief thought this was his own spirit there in that mirror, and he did not want to "meet up" with it.

I finally persuaded him that there was nothing there that would hurt him, and they all came in and gathered around, looking at the mirror, his wives especially being delighted with it—they weren't afraid of it, it came natural to them! Then I started to show the phonograph to him. We had one of those prehistoric ones with the horn on it, such as your grandparents enjoyed, because victrolas had not gotten as far as Africa at that time. But it made a good deal of noise, and even played some pretty good tunes. Naturally we had no

records in his language, but I remembered that we had a record in that universal language, laughter, so I put on this laughing piece, started the old tin machine, and looked around to see how he was taking it, but he was not there. He was under the table looking for the man who was doing all that laughing. He looked everywhere in the house, moving chairs and tables, even pulling aside the curtains. Finally he was convinced that it was the machine which was doing the laughing, and he was properly impressed.

Then we went out and looked at the printing press, the steamer, the hospital, and various other things. We went to the industrial school and saw the little machinery which we have there. We saw all the multitudinous activities of a modern mission station. Finally he turned to me and said: "I have seen all this wisdom, but now, White Man, you haven't yet shown me the real thing I wanted to see here, and I almost forgot to ask you. I have seen a government white man, and I have seen a trading white man, and I have seen a Jesus white man, and I have seen a Jesus white woman, but I haven't seen a Jesus white baby yet."

Our African mission, as usual, was equal to the emergency. One of my colleagues had a little girl about four months old, so we went over to his house to see the baby. I think that as long as I live I will never forget the look on the old man's face as he came into the door of that house and saw this American Christian mother standing there holding this beautiful little white baby in her arms. He put his hand over his mouth in the expressive gesture of his race, and said, "A-a--a-h." She was the most wonderful thing he had ever seen since he had come upon the earth. I wonder, after all, if there is anything more wonderful.

After he had called the attention of his wives and elders to the baby, and they had gone into transports of delight, he said: "But, White Man, are your babies born with clothes on?" He had never seen a baby with clothes on before. I explained to him that our babies were just like theirs, only a little lighter in color. Just then a little pink foot peeped out below the edge of the baby's dress, and his hand went over his mouth again. "A-a-ah," he said to his wives, "look at that little foot." Then he said, "Surely, White Man, that is not a real baby. That is a white spirit, isn't it?" Very fortunately, just then the baby began to cry, and it did not take long to convince him that it was not a spirit, but a real baby.

Then the father of the baby, who had been drinking in this admiration of his little girl, took a notion that he wanted to show the chief the little bed which he had made for his baby girl. You know that over there we are a long way from department stores, and whenever you want a crib for your baby, or anything else, for that matter, you have to make it yourself, or get someone to make it for you. The father of this baby was a man of considerable skill as a carpenter. So he had taken various kinds of the different colored woods which grow in the forest, and had made a really nice little crib for his wee lassie.

So we took the chief in to see the baby's bed. In that land of many swamps, the mosquitoes are like the poor—always with us, and there must be a mosquito net over every bed. This little baby's bed had, therefore, a nice mosquito canopy over it, and had little blankets, and pillows, and everything. I do not need to tell you American mothers anything about it, because mothers on the Congo are American mothers

still. Praise God, you can't change a woman by making her a missionary!

He looked at the bed, and then began to look more puzzled than ever. "White Man, do you mean to tell me that no one sleeps in this bed except that tiny baby? Under this beautiful net no one else sleeps at all?" "No." "Those blankets and those white sheets, and that pillow—that is all for that little baby?" "Yes." And in much less time than it takes for me to tell you, all his interest was turned to anger. "White Man, something is wrong somewhere. Here I am, a great chief. I have seventeen wives. There are many villages which pay tribute to my village. I have the power of life and death. When I shake my spear, my people tremble. They wonder which one is going to be killed next. But when I go to sleep at night, one of my wives spreads a mat on the ground, and builds a smudge fire to keep some of the mosquitoes from biting me—and that tiny white baby sleeps alone in that beautiful big bed. White Man, things are not divided up right!" Very dignified in his indignation, he stalked out of the house, not even deigning to look again at the baby whom he had been willing to love but a few minutes before.

Friends, ever since I heard those words, they have been rankling in my heart. I cannot get away from them. "Things are not divided up right!" Think of all the beautiful and comfortable things which go to make up this marvelous civilization of ours. Not those which grace the palaces of the rich, but those which are in our humblest homes; things which we count as nothing. Not one of them has penetrated into this poverty-stricken land of Africa, or into those dark, smoky, vile-smelling huts of bamboo and leaves, where hunger

stalks at noontide and pestilence at midnight. And worst of all, we have denied them that unspeakable gift of God's only Son to us. No, friends, you know, and I know, that things are not divided up right.

So I want to talk to you in these pages about some of the things which go to make up the life of this people, and of what the Gospel of the Son of God is doing to change that old life, in-written through the centuries, so that no longer may the stinging, accusing words of the old chief be true. We cannot be loyal to the Captain of our souls and let them remain true.

"O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine."

CHAPTER II

Where the Congo Crosses the Equator

WE are to think together for a little while regarding the land of my adoption, and of a people who have become in a very real sense my people. So I want to point out to you in the very beginning that particular part of Africa of which I am speaking, for you remember that it is a very large continent. Some of you are still in school, and others of you will have kept your geographies or atlases, so I hope that one of these days you will open those books again and look at the map of Africa. As you glance at the central part of the Dark Continent, I would like for you to notice particularly the Congo River, the second largest river in the world. You will note that there in the heart of Africa that mighty river makes a great, horseshoe-like bend just before it flows to the west and south out into the Atlantic Ocean, in so doing crossing the equator twice. Now, whenever you want to remember where your missionary in Africa lives, just remind yourself that Bolenge * is located exactly where the Congo River crosses the equator the second time on its way to the ocean, and that within that horseshoe-like bend of the Congo dwell many *Bantu* tribes, worthy of all one's dreams and aspirations. And among those al-

* Disciples of Christ Congo Mission (United Christian Missionary Society). Our other stations—Latunabe, Monieka, and Mondombe, are in the same latitude, but the east, and are located on the great Bussira tributaries of the Congo.

most numberless tribes, I am thinking of one in whose midst I have lived. They call themselves the *Bankundo,* but I love to think of them as "My Children of the Forest," because this part of Africa, which in the long ago was an inland sea, is today one great forest, growing in a vast swamp; and wherever in that forest we find a dry spot, we will most surely find a little village.

For the problem of winning Congoland for Christ is not the problem it is in many lands—that of evangelizing closely grouped multitudes in great cities; but that other problem of taking the wonderful story of our wonderful Christ to every one of those tiny villages literally hidden away in the midst of that forest.

That you may understand something of the life of this part of Africa, and the life of my people, I want you to see them today through my eyes, in the small way such a thing is possible, and with that aim in view, I am going to propose that we take a flying, imaginary journey to Congoland, visiting one of those little villages yonder in the heart of that primeval woodland.

If you had known beforehand about this, you might have left your Sunday clothes at home, for we are not going to visit any mission station in the beginning, no matter how attractive that station may be. Instead, the captain of the steamer, who is taking us up the Congo River, will stop some miles before reaching the mission station. He will put us on shore, and we will strike at once into the jungle.

We will not go very far until we find that the only excuses for roads in this part of Africa are little paths, usually not more than two or three feet wide, winding and twisting everywhere among the giant trees which go to make up that great woodland. As we go along

that forest footpath, we will find that it is not very smooth. Here we trip over roots. Going on a little farther, we find a tree fallen across our path. You cannot go around it in the thick jungle. There is one of two things you must do: crawl under or climb over. We go only a little distance farther when there bursts upon us a tropical shower. The only adequate way to describe Congo tropical showers is to say that they knock the bottom out of the sky and let all the water come down at once. We will get under the trees, but it will not be very long until they are wet through, and as soon as that happens, we get wet through also. But there is one beautiful thing about a tropical shower, and that is that it is usually quickly over. Then the sun comes out brightly, and before long we have forgotten all about the shower.

Continuing along that path, we come all too soon to the most common, if not the most pleasant thing in that forest, and that is a swamp. There are just two ways of getting across a Congo swamp. One is to wade. The only trouble with that method is that the swamp is composed more of mud than of water, and how black and sticky that mud is! The other way is by means of a native bridge. This bridge is the simplest sort of a contrivance you ever saw. They take poles about six inches in diameter and lay them end to end across that swamp, tying them together where they meet. Each one of those poles is just a little slicker and a little more slippery than the one before it, made so by the bare feet of the people crossing them for so many years. As you must get across this swamp, you may take your choice: you may wade, or cross by this native bridge, but after all, it does not make any dif-

ference which way you choose, because you always wade!

Now this is Sunday morning, and you will not have had time to change your clothes before starting, so we will pretend that this particular time we got safely across this bridge and a half dozen others like it, following always this winding path—it is not much of a road, but we must not leave it, because it is the one trail which leads to the haunts and the hearts of men back yonder in the forest.

As we travel on, we soon notice that the giant forest trees which have been all about us there are now being replaced by palm trees, and that is a sure sign that we are approaching the native village which is the goal of our journey.

Suddenly a most unusual noise bursts upon our ears, and you will likely ask: "What is that? Are we in any danger?" No, that is the people singing over yonder in the village. And even at that distance you come to the conclusion that for white ears African music has about it almost everything except harmony and tune and melody.

But on we go, and soon after that the palm trees are in turn replaced by banana trees, a sign that we are arriving; and quite suddenly the path broadens, and we come out into the little open clearing where it built this village of the forest. There it is stretched out before us, just two rows of bamboo huts facing each other across the one hot, dusty street.

CHAPTER III

A Village Nestling in the Forest

HOW sheltered and hidden within its encircling walls of forest greenery is this little hamlet! Can you realize that its dwellers have never seen the horizon? All they know is that the blue sky comes down and joins the tops of the trees, and beyond that their vision has never had any outreach. Is it any wonder, then, that in their isolation these Forest Children of mine have fallen behind in the onward march of civilization?

But none of them are here today. Their singing was hushed with our appearance, and they all ran away. Why? Because not all white people who have gone into that forest have gone as we go today, with empty hands and gentle hearts; but instead, with modern rifles in their hands, and with cruelty in their hearts. And so it has come to pass that white is everywhere in that forest land the sign of mourning and the sign of death. When they looked upon these white faces of ours, they immediately took to the woods, and if you knew some of the white men I have known in that land, you would not wonder that they ran away. But we have with us some native Christians, and as soon as they see that the villagers have run away, and know that they are hiding very close (because curiosity is something which is not confined to any race or any sex),

one of them will shout: *"Loyaka! Bendele bene bi'-elöci mo! Iyo bendele bia Nzakomba, balaki ba Yesu Masiya. Loyaka loene. Loyaka-e!"* Which, being freely translated, means something like this: "You come back here. These are good white people who have come today. They are the white people of God, the teachers of Jesus Christ. Come back and see for yourselves." And pretty soon we see them coming back. The men are braver, and they come first, although with weapons in their hands; the women a little more timidly; and then the children, peering around their mothers' skirts—or would if they had any skirts! And it will not be very long until we have gathered about us there the whole village, all of them at least as interested in you as you are in them.

I remember hearing an old chief telling about the first time the white man landed upon their shores, just where the Congo crosses the equator. Some years ago, a Belgian explorer came along. When he landed, he reached his hand into his pocket and brought out a little paper. He reached his hand into another pocket and produced another piece of paper. Then he rolled the pieces together. He was rolling a cigarette. He reached his hand into his pocket the third time and pulled out a match, lighting his cigarette in the well-approved fashion. As he did so the people departed, and they did not stop departing until they had reached the next town. They told their friends about this man who had come to their village. They said: "He is not like us. His hands and his face are white. We do not know anything about the rest of him, because he had himself all covered up with something." They described what the man did with the cigarette, and added: "Then he reached his hand into those clothes,

and taking out a little stick, rubbed it on those wonderful clothes, and fire came out of him!"

We proud Anglo-Saxons learn in other lands that to other races we are not so handsome as we love to think, and it is something of a shock to find them frightened at our pale faces.

As the inhabitants of this little village gather about us as we rest in the shade of a wide-spreading tree, this will be your opportunity to observe them. But it is also my opportunity, for I know their language. So look at them as you will, but "woe is me if I preach not the Gospel" in such a village. How they do listen!

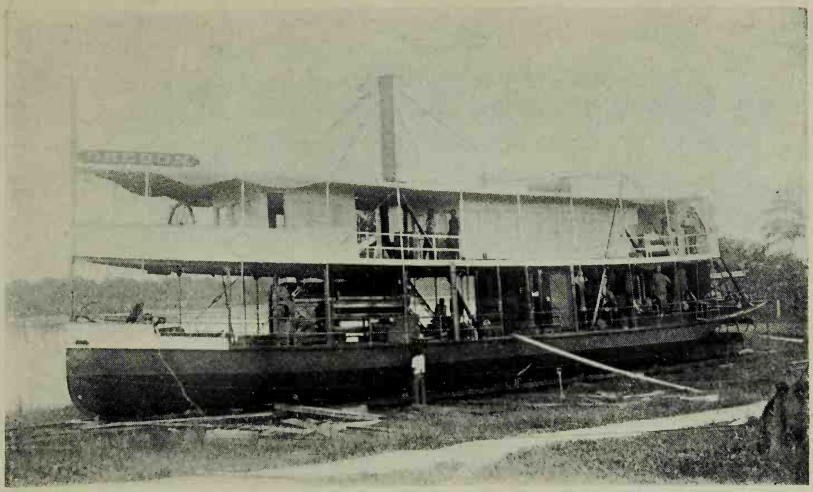
No doubt your first feeling as you look upon these forest-dwellers will be one of disappointment, because all the time we were coming along that narrow foot-path, and struggling through the swamps, you thought you were going to find all the people in this village as black as the ace of spades. Now you see instead that they are all red, from the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet; because, instead of wearing anything very much in the way of clothes, they take red paint and rub it over their bodies and their faces in a thick coat. Let me tell you a little secret: the men do it too over there! Then they take this same red paint and rub it thickly into their hair, and do their hair up in all sorts of weird, strange, and fantastic shapes—towers and cones and miters and pillars and horns and everything you can imagine—at least I thought it was everything that you could imagine until about three years ago when I landed in this country! It is not so easy to be surprised since then.

Now this kind of hair-dressing requires a lot of time, so naturally they do not wish to repeat it any oftener than is necessary. The kind of pillows they

use are a great help in this, as they are curved wooden ones, on which the neck rests, instead of the head. So a Congo belle may have her hair done up to suit her style of beauty, and know that it will stay that way for a month.

When you learn how infrequently the hair is combed and dressed, you will not be too much surprised to learn that often in its depths more than paint is to be found. Talk about the "teeming millions" of Africa!

There is another impression which these people who gather about you here is bound to make upon you, and that is that they are very fond of jewelry, especially the women, though the men indulge also. Every bit of that jewelry is brass, and it seems to be valued chiefly on account of its weight. You will see the children wearing heavy bracelets about their little wrists, and beautifully wrought anklets about their ankles. Here and there you will see women wearing brass anklets which wind in spiral fashion from the ankle to the knee, and if you were to take one of these anklets off, you would find that it weighs from seven to ten pounds. You will be bound to see a few women, scattered through the crowd, having heavy brass collars, also beautifully wrought, for you must remember that, while these people are isolated from all contacts with civilization, they have been able to discover how to make some beautiful things. If you were to take one of those collars from a woman's neck, which is a difficult and painful process, you would find that it weighs anywhere from twenty to thirty pounds. Whenever you see a woman like this in the crowd, you may understand that she is the favorite wife of her husband, because we come here to a very important thing in the social life of the people, and that is polygamy, which is



THE STEAMER "OREGON" IN DRY-DOCK

A TYPICAL STREET, MONIEKA. NATIVE WOMEN MAKING POTS.

the universal practice. A man is not considered really married until he has at least two wives. And there is no other hindrance to a ready acceptance of Jesus and "The Words of God" so powerful as this custom.

There is one other thing which is very characteristic of the people gathered about you, and that is that their eyes are fixed on you with such curiosity. They never have seen anything so wonderful as these white people who have come among them today. Very likely if this village has never seen any white people before, they will be saying one to another: "Oh, they are those people about whom Ejimo Mpela prophesied a long time ago." And if you ask the old men, they will tell you about this chief of the Ikengo region, of whom so many legends are told, the most powerful of any chief in the neighborhood of Bolenge. He subjugated many of the other villages, and, in his old age, claimed to have the gift of prophecy.

When he was very near to death, he gathered all the people together one day and said to them: "Now, my children, I am going away from you, and after I am gone you are going to see a very wonderful thing. You know that whenever we go out upon the river in our dug-out canoes, we have to send them along with paddles by our own strength; but one day you will see canoes made out of iron, and those canoes will paddle themselves. Also on board those canoes you will see people different from any that you have ever seen. In the first place, they will be all covered up like the silk-worm in its cocoon; and more wonderful still, none of them will have black faces as we have, but their faces will be all faded out and white. And when those people land here in your village, make sure that you give them

a welcome, because they come from the Great Spirit above."

If we stay in this village a day or so, we may find its life most interesting in the evening, because then the men, who have been out hunting and fishing all day, come back home. We see camp-fires lit all over the village, and it is the most pleasant time of the day. The women, when they went out to their gardens earlier in the day, brought back heavy baskets of food, with the bundles of firewood, and pretty soon the kettles are boiling merrily. Sometimes they all gather around the fire and tell one another stories, but the thing they like to do best, I am sorry to say, is to dance. And because we are visitors in this town, just as likely as not they will have a special dance in our honor. Now because we are Christians, we do not go to native dances in that land, but I know that you are curious, so I am going to take you to see one of their dances. Pretty soon you will hear out in the village the sound of the *ngoma* drum, and soon the people commence to gather very excitedly. They always beat on these skin-covered drums with their hands to keep time for the dances. You go out there in the open space in front of the chief's house and see them dancing around a great fire, each of them wearing for this particular dance a little short grass skirt. As the people dance, you turn to me and say: "Why, that is the 'Shimmy Dance!' " And of course I will say: "Well, what else could it be? Didn't you know that the 'Shimmy Dance' came from Africa?" Just imagine! Our Christians over there would not go to see that kind of a dance, as they think it is immoral, but the people in this country pay to see them.

Friends, make sure that you will never be long in a heathen village like that without hearing things and

seeing things which, as long as you live, you will wish that you had never seen or heard. I remember once being in one of those villages nestling in the forest. While I was talking with the chief I suddenly heard what seemed to be the screams of a child. So I asked him: "What is that noise? Who is crying like that?" The chief replied: "Come with me, White Man. It is nothing to worry about. Come and I will show you." He led me on past the row of huts, and came to the edge of the village, and I want you to imagine that you went with me, in this visit of yours. There we saw a little girl, perhaps four or five years of age, lying on her back. Two strong men were holding her hands and two others holding her feet. The fifth man, whom I knew by his ornaments to be a witch-doctor, was engaged in cutting on the child's face the tribal marks. Very fortunately, our people of the *Bankundo* cut but few such marks. Another tribe cuts fifteen of them. Others cut eighteen, and still others cut as many as thirty-six different marks on the face. Our people cut only three principal marks: a dotted line down the forehead, made to resemble a cockscomb, and on each side, just in front of the ear, a small palm leaf. The purpose of these marks is that you may be able to tell your enemy or your friend as far as you may see him, because anyone who does not belong to your tribe is your enemy, and should you meet him, your duty to your tribe and your race is to see that only one of you returns alive from that meeting.

I watched him cut those marks . . . and perhaps you mothers think you have heard children scream, but I tell you that you never have. Back over the years and across the oceans come to me today the piercing screams of that little girl. But the witch-doctor, as, with a rather blunt knife he cut those marks

in the living flesh of that child, seemed not to be worrying very much about the screams, nor her struggles, nor even yet the blood which flowed so freely. No, to him it was almost a work of art. He wanted to make sure that those palm leaves were beautifully and accurately shaped, just as they had been shaped throughout all the long history of the *Bankundo,* since they began to cut these tribal marks upon the faces of their people.

As I watched, he had finished, and picking up a gourd by his side, he dashed something on the wounds which I found out afterwards to be the fiery sap of a certain tree. If you thought the little girl was screaming before, it seemed now a hundred times worse. I found that the reason he dashed this fiery medicine upon the wounds was that they might not heal too soon. They must not heal quickly if their purpose is to be achieved. Instead, they must be kept open through long weeks, even being propped open by wads of raffia, so that, when they finally do heal, each one of those scars will stand out in clear, bold relief from the face, making sure that this little girl, grown to womanhood—and it is the same with the boys—wherever she should go in all that broad land of the forest, would be recognized at a glance as belonging to the tribe of the *Bankundo.*

Heart-sick, we are almost ready to leave this village and its dwellers, and to go sadly away. All the peace and quietness in which it seemed wrapped, as it nestles there in the forest, have been rudely swept away. We have learned once more that savage life is inherently cruel, and that there is a significant reason for the gentle heart of civilization. And much remains yet for us to see of the life of that village.

CHAPTER IV

The Peace-Maker

ANOTHER very characteristic thing about these forest villagers is that all the men have weapons in their hands. For this is a land where might is the only right, a land where the oppressor and he who grinds the faces of the poor have their own way, and there is no law known save the law of the one who can enforce his legislation with his strong right arm, or by the swift strokes of his loyal warriors; and that kind of authority breeds tyranny and cruelty.

The older men have a broad strap around their shoulders, from which hangs at the side a wicked knife in a wooden sheath. In their right hands they hold long, thrusting, broad-bladed spears, the sign of their rank as the elder warriors, who go into battle last. They frequently have also on their left arms curiously and beautifully woven wicker-work shields. The younger men have bows and arrows, short swords, war clubs, spears, lances, battle axes, javelins, and every sort of imaginable weapon, except firearms.

We have been able so far to find only five principal tools. The women, who do all the farming, have two tools for their part of the work. One is a little narrow-bladed hoe, with a handle seldom over a foot long, with which they dig about in the ground and try to raise something for the sustenance of the family. All day long, under that merciless equatorial sun, you may see

them bending over their gardens, and if they are old, as so many of them seem to be, one may almost see the stoop of centuries in those patient, weary backs. In addition, for clearing out weeds, they have a short, broad-bladed knife.

For cutting down trees, and clearing the ground for the women's farms, for hollowing out their canoes, for making paddles with which to send those canoes through the water, for making handles for tools and weapons, the men have also two tools: a little narrow-bladed ax, and a still narrower-bladed adz. Add to these the blacksmith's hammer, and you have the five tools which make up their whole equipment for industrial life.

Now when you remember that we have found already more than a hundred different weapons, and put that fact over against this, that they have only five tools, you may understand that war in the long-ago figured a great deal more largely in their ideals than did industry. In fact fighting was considered the natural and normal thing.

I remember once some years ago going through this country; day after day I went along the narrow jungle paths; day after day crossing those native bridges or wading those swamps; night after night sleeping in native villages which had just heard the Good News of Jesus Christ our Lord, until finally I came into the country which they call Ilanga. There I found that a confederacy of villages, calling themselves Ikenge, were fighting with another confederacy of villages by the name of Bombenga. And I found that all the region between Bombenga and Ikenge had been devastated by this war of theirs.

While I was talking to the people, and sympathizing

with them in the misfortune which had come upon them, a deputation came from the warring regions, asking if the white man would not come and arbitrate the trouble and see if he could make peace.

Because the missionary of Christ in Central Africa must very frequently be a peacemaker, it seemed wise to go. So I remember as if it were yesterday how the next night just at dusk we came to the outskirts of the little frontier village which had been set apart as the meeting place for this miniature peace conference. We were going along one of those narrow footpaths, and very fortunately we had with us a guide from that region. As we neared the village—you remember that on the equator the sun sets every night exactly at six o'clock—it was commencing to get dark. We were following our guide very closely when all of a sudden he said to us in an imperative whisper: *"Ikŏke!"* Now let me tell you another secret of the life of that forest. If you are ever going through that country, and somebody says: *"Ikŏke!"* to you, the thing to do is to *"Ikŏke"* as quickly as you possibly can! For it means, "Be careful." We wondered what was the matter until we saw our guide lift up the grass and show us the nearest approach these poor barbarous people have ever come to a barbed wire entanglement! They had taken little sticks, about eighteen inches long, sharpened them at both ends, and poisoned one end, driving the unpoisoned end into the ground in a slanting fashion, the poisoned end pointing in the direction in which the enemy was expected to come. There were literally thousands of them planted closely together in long, zigzag rows, covered over so cleverly that if the people of the village had not seen them put in, they would not have known that they were there.

So we were very glad when our guide led us by a secret path until he had gotten us by this entanglement, and we thought our troubles were over. But we had not gone more than two hundred feet farther when suddenly our guide stopped and said in an even more imperative whisper—he did not dare speak above a whisper, for ambushed enemies were all about us—that same warning, *"Ikŏke."* I can assure you that he did not have to tell us twice that time. We simply froze in our tracks, wondering what it was about now. Then our guide lifted up the grass and showed us a great, yawning hole dug in the ground, perhaps ten feet across and ten feet in depth, and in the bottom of that pit had been planted great stakes as large as one's arm and about three feet long, prepared just like those smaller ones. Standing in the bottom of this pit were a dozen of these, with sharp-pointed, poisoned ends upright. Then they had taken vines and small branches from the forest, and woven them together across the top of the pit. After that, they had spread leaves and grass and other green things of the forest over the top, so that it looked just like the leafy carpet of that woodland itself. Now they were waiting for the moment when their enemies should charge and by their weight should break through the flimsy covering of the pit and be impaled upon those terrible stakes beneath. We surely were still more glad that we had a guide who knew about these pits. He led us by a detour between two of them, because they had dug a circle of pits entirely around the village.

We went along perhaps three hundred feet farther, seeing in the gathering darkness the banana trees about us, and hearing in the near distance the noises of the village. We thought that surely nothing else could

happen to us, when there burst out in the clear evening air that sound which everyone in that land learns to dread: *"Koom! Koom! Koom! Koom! Koom!"*—the deep-throated voice of the great wooden war-drum, sending out its resounding message, broadcasting to all the people of that village and its allied villages—because these war-drums are able to send their sounds a long distance—the sound which meant but one word: "War! War! War! War! War!"

Then, because this drum is also the African wireless telephone, its deep-throated voice changed now to one of clicking Lonkundo code, and instead of beating with one stick as before, they were beating with two, and we could hear the message as it was sent out in code to all the villages round about. And you would be much surprised to know how far that sound will carry. We strangers did not know what the code meant, nor did we have time to ask, but our guide told us the next day what the message was. It ran something like this: "Young men, young men in ambush in the forest! You who have your bows and arrows! Listen! The enemy has passed the row of sharpened sticks. They have gotten by the row of pits which we dug. They are now within the limits of our village. Now is the time for the clouds of arrows, the clouds of poisoned arrows. Shoot quickly. They must not come to our houses. They must not take our wives and our children. Shoot the arrows!" But fortunately, our guide knew the code, and as soon as he heard this message from the drum, he shouted out that this was the white missionary who had come all the way from his mission station on the banks of the Congo to make peace among them, and there came that night no cloud of poisoned arrows.

I remember just as well how we gathered the next day for the peace conference. Here at my right hand were gathered the elders and the chiefs from Bombenga, and here at my left the chiefs and elders from Ikenge. The white man had a chair, hewn from a solid block of wood, in the center, beneath the wide-spreading palaver tree, nature's town-hall. From early in the morning until four o'clock in the evening they told how the war had commenced, how it had been carried on, and how it might be ended; one orator speaking first for Ikenge and the next for Bombenga, until finally we came, late in the afternoon, to the last speaker. How well I remember what he had to say. It was something like this: "White Man, you have come a long way here to make peace among us. Many have spoken this day—some in wisdom and some in foolishness. But after all, we have a very simple problem here, and it will be very easy for you to end this war."

Pointing to his enemies, he continued: "Those people over there have killed ten of our people." He did not say they had eaten them, but we knew that they had. (Let me tell you another thing about the life of that forest. If you are ever going through there and anybody invites you out for a meal, make sure that you are being invited *to* dinner, and not *for* dinner!) He said: "Those people over there have killed ten of our people, and we have killed only seven of theirs. Now, White Man, all you have to do is to take three of their people and give them to us and let us kill them as we will, and this war will end tomorrow." I remember how he, one of a people of graphic gestures, summed up his items. When you close your hand it means ten. *"Jom,"* he said, "ten;

four and three, and the three of those people you are going to give us make *Jom,* ten. *O fiö,* it is equal now. *Etumba eosila,* the war is ended." Was not that an easy way to end the war? All you have to do is to take three people, let heathenism, with all its fiendish ingenuity, torture them and kill them as it will, and lo and behold, peace is here! Of course; for when did heathenism ever care anything about the lives of three people? Or when did heathenism ever care anything about life at all? Life, that which in our Christian civilization is the dearest and the rarest thing we know, is in the heart of that forest the cheapest and commonest thing you can find anywhere.

Now, friends, that is what Africa was everywhere yesterday. It is what it is today, everywhere that the footsteps of Jesus have not marked the new trail along which Africa is to go toward civilization, progress, and redemption. But Jesus has gone to Africa, and because the prints of the nails in His footsteps are marking out the "pathways of peace," we are looking forward with glad longings to the time when no longer shall the deep-throated voice of the war drum resound through those woodlands.

"Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
We hear Thy voice, O Son of Man."

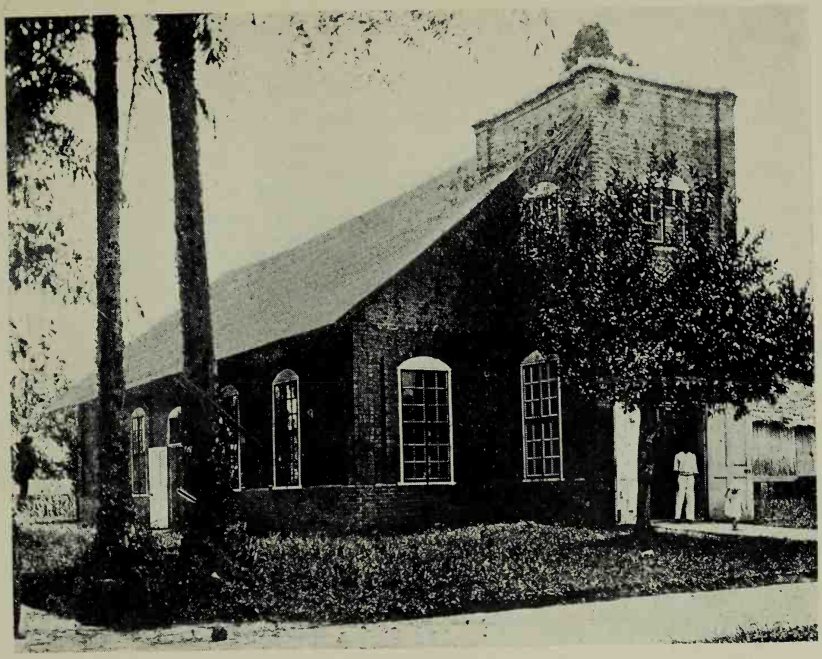
CHAPTER V

The Remaking of Life

MY friends, now that you have seen that primordial village, I want you to see another kind, for the Gospel of the Son of God has been preached in the Land of the Forest, and, because the Living Christ has gone to Africa, the life of that land can never be the same again.

I wish now that you might go along with me back to beautiful Bolenge, there on the banks of the Congo. It is a land where there are so many things that are not pleasant. But you should see our mission station. Come with me up the Congo and see it there on the bluff. Sit under the branches of its trees, wander among the flowers and fruits and shrubbery. Go with me down the path where the branches have entwined above you so that you seem to be walking beneath cathedral arches. When the sun comes glimmering down through these palm arches, you realize that you are where, by the hand of man and the help of God, beauty reigns supreme.

If the limits of these pages did not forbid such an extended visit, you would do well to see all the multitudinous agencies and activities of this modern mission station: the day-school; the special schools for boys and girls, and for training preachers; the hospital and dispensary; the plantations, where agriculture is taught; the industrial building, with its machinery; the saw-mill and planer; all these, and many more. All



BRICK CHURCH AT BOLENGE. SEATS ABOUT 900.

TYPE OF TEMPORARY CHURCH USED IN MISSION FIELD.

we can hope to do is to glance at them as we pass, and we must even pass by the open doors of the hospitable missionary bungalows.

For, above all else, I am anxious that you see the Christian village, builded round about that beautiful station there on the banks of the Congo. I well remember my last Sunday at Bolenge, and I heard there that same kind of a drum which I had heard back yonder in the forest, sending out its same deep-throated, imperative voice, saying to the people: "You must gather together, you must gather together." But this time it was calling them, not to carnage, not to cannibal feasts, as too often it had called them in those other days, but it was calling them to worship there in the brick church, builded beneath the palms.

As you go with them along the streets of this Christian village, and as you remember those filthy bamboo huts back there in the jungle, please notice these airy cottages, built here by men who are founding Christian homes. And I want you, as you think of the little children in this land, to remember that in that forest, childhood is not what it is here. As you remember that, you will not fail to look upon the faces of the little children playing along the streets of this Christian village, on their way to the Bible School, and upon their brown faces you will see that no tribal marks have been cut, and, please God, on those smooth brown faces no tribal marks will ever be cut. I believe that if the Gospel of the Son of God had done nothing else in the heart of Africa than to commence the abolition of this cruel and hideous custom, it has justified every dollar, and even every life, which the Church has given for the redemption of Africa.

As we come down that palm-arched pathway, we

notice that it is full of people. They are very different from the people we have been meeting over in the forest. These people are clothed in neat, well-fitting garments. Many are clothed in white, for it is the Lord's Day and they are going to church. We pass them and observe their bright faces. As we come a little nearer, a sound breaks on our ears. We hear them singing over in the church, and our thoughts go back to that singing in the forest. What a contrast! And as you listen, it will not be difficult for you to believe that it is only redeemed people who can really sing from the soul.

Twenty years ago there was organized at Bolenge a church of twenty-four members. As soon as they knew the meaning of the Good News, they commenced to go out along those winding pathways and in canoes along those rivers, telling that Good News everywhere. And today, in our Mission in Africa, there are more than eight thousand five hundred * members in our churches, and we believe that more than fifty thousand people have been quite definitely changed because of the coming of that message, although all have not yet had the courage to come out on the Lord's side.

In the Congo Basin twenty missions make up the Kingdom hosts. Seventy stations strive to be broadcasting centers for the Gospel message and life, and fifty-five thousand members were reported in 1920. And who is discerning enough to be able to measure in figures the pervasive influence of the Living Message, and to tell us how many people have been influenced by its power? But these figures, even though they record so remarkable a history of what the years have wrought, tell only the smaller part of the story. One

*Annual Report for 1922.

needs to know the horrible pit of African heathenism from whence these Congo Christians have been dug, and then to know the new Christian community, which is growing up wherever there has been planted a mission station or wherever a native evangelist lives, to realize even in small degree that which our wonderful Savior has wrought in Congoland.

As you remember those half-naked people whom you saw back there in the forest, I want you to look at these who gather now in this church beneath the palms. You will note that they have washed off this filthy red paint, and that they are clad neatly and modestly. And then listen to them as they sing the songs of Zion, singing them in that wonderful, rhythmic Lonkundo language. It is time for the Communion Service which, as in all our churches the world around, occurs every Lord's Day. They are singing, to prepare their hearts for the sacred feast, a translation of that beautiful sacramental hymn, "Break Thou the Bread of Life":

"A is'oya endo, Faf'ekiso,
Otosakel'iso bokako swa;
Kela tokanele baoi bake,
La ncina eki Yesu ayobwa.

"Al'iso tökö toe nda Mes'eke,
Betema bekiso besubame,
Kela cofwa Yesu ki nko aye,
Mpa cen'elong'ekande l'osalo." *

Then watch them gather about the table of the memory of the Lord Christ, as we gather here in the homeland. Watch this man who sits at our right. Look at his tribal marks. He does not belong to the *Bankundo*

* Translation by Mrs. Alice Ferrin Hensey.

tribe. He is a *Bobangi*. Yonder is an *Ngömbe*. To your left is a *Boloi*. Those two in front are of the *Ibinza*. And among the twelve deacons who pass these emblems you will find represented five different tribes —men who in other days had only to see each other to try to kill one another. But now, by the reconciling power of the love of our Lord and our Master, they are able to gather around one communion table. As they partake together of those emblems, it is well for us to remember that it is a very far cry from eating human flesh, the flesh of one's enemies for revenge, to partaking of those emblems which speak to us of the self-sacrificing love of the Son of God for the children of men.

Our hearts are stilled and hushed as we see these Children of the Forest gathered about the table of the memorial of the Lord's death. As we notice that all within the church are standing with bowed heads, we too bow our heads, and are impressed by the reverence and devotion of the hour. We listen to the address. Ah! if you could only understand the words of the man who stands by the side of the communion table, you would know that in just a few simple words he is making plain to the listeners the meaning of this wonderful table of memorial. Now he is lifting up every heart to the very throne of God.

Much as I should like to have you know that prayer, I would rather have you know what that man was before the Gospel came to Bolenge. Intole was the one who always led when his village went out to battle. Feared and dreaded was he in all the districts round about; but today, instead of boasting, as he did of old, of the blood on his hands, or the number of people he had slain, he is a simple-hearted, childlike, Spirit-

filled man of God. That is what the Gospel means to these people on the Congo. Sunday after Sunday the congregation at our mission station is composed of men just like Intole. Thirty years ago they were naked, blood-thirsty cannibals. Today they are endeavoring as best they may to enthrone Christ in their church and in their lives.

You would hardly believe it if I should tell you the consecration of these people in the matter of giving. The first time they sat at the communion table they took up an offering for missions so that their brethren should hear the Gospel. They also passed a resolution that out of their number they would support one in every ten as a missionary. That day they sent out three, and today they support a large number by their own consecrated gifts. In the beginning the ideal was that they should pay to the Lord a tithe of their income, and send out a tithe of their membership as evangelists. The spreading of the Good News everywhere and the growth of the church, with so many unshepherded groups of Christians in so many isolated villages, has made this ideal impossible of attainment. But these forest followers of Jesus are themselves taking the Gospel to every nook and corner of their own dark land, until today the work of the missionary is not so much that of an evangelist, but instead the oversight of all these hosts of missionary preachers, supported by the people who have been saved.

Friends, Jesus has gone to Africa, and because He has, because His footprints are commencing to make that new trail, some happy day the new Africa is going to be born; some glad day the Children of the Forest are going to become the Children of God.

CHAPTER VI

The Fight Against Fear

YOU need to know that this Land of the Forest is a Land of Fear. If you were going along one of those narrow jungle paths, you never would be going at night unless there was a very large number of you and every man had a torch. Ordinarily, no native ever goes into that forest at night, because he has peopled it with a countless multitude of evil spirits who are waiting there to see what harm they may do to any child of the human race.

So if you were going along one of those paths and belonged to the Bankundo tribe instead of belonging to this white race of ours, and it was commencing to get dusk, you would quicken your pace, and try to get to the nearest village before dark. For every child of that forest is a child of its fear, and all about him lurks danger. Evil spirits cluster about every leaf of its trees, and only await the darkness to pounce upon him and wreak upon him some terrible ill. One of the saddest features of this forest creed is that the most malevolent of those spirits may be the *bekaji,* the ancestral ghosts, for the natives are confident that when the spirit of father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or wife, leaves the body to wander in the forest and jungle, it has particularly evil designs upon those whom it had loved in the flesh.

After the years spent among them, one cannot help but have a little sympathy with their fear, because somehow this forest of theirs seems very different from ours. You may go for hours through it and hear no song of birds, none of those cheerful sounds which go to make up the joy and beauty of our American woodlands. I wonder if anywhere on God's green earth there is any place that is more silent, more solitary, or more mysterious than this same African forest. Each child of that forest has, somehow, had that feeling of mystery written into his whole soul life so that fear is the one thing that overmasters him all the time. Its grip is ever on his heart and on his will.

There is but one great fear—that of *Death.* It comes all so relentlessly and in so many forms there in the forest, where reigns the law of tooth and fang. And it sends up from the hearts which it grips two primeval and eternal cries—the cry of *Hunger,* for no one knows what it is not to be hungry, and the cry for *Rest,* for in that terror-cursed land no one sleeps in peace. How can they, when uncounted spirits and ghosts and demons people the night, and each lies down upon his mat with nameless fear like lead upon his heart?

It has become customary to picture the brow of the man of the wilds as utterly untroubled, but the opposite is the truth. F. W. Boreham, with his usual keen discrimination, says of primitive life:

"So far from being a picnic, it is a nightmare. The savage is surrounded by companions whom he cannot trust, and he feels himself to be at the mercy of natural forces of which he is horribly afraid. Every puff of wind which blows upon him is the breath of a demon. The air is full of hateful and malignant spirits."

Once in a little gathering where the few followers of Jesus in that village met about a camp-fire, one after the other told of that which the Savior had wrought in his or her life. Finally a quavering old voice gave this testimony, the flames lighting up her fine old wrinkled face: "White Man, does Jesus do for you in your country what He does for us here? Before I heard the Words of God I was always afraid to go to bed at night. Now I never cease to rejoice that Jesus has taken away fear and that I may sleep calmly."

As we saw the "peace of God which passeth all understanding" writ so largely on her face, it came almost as a shock that we seldom count among our blessings the privilege of sound and refreshing sleep. To those Christians of the jungle, one never needs to explain the demons with whom the Son of Man contended. Nor do they need any commentary on Paul's words in the twentieth verse of the tenth chapter of the first Corinthian Letter:

"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."

One of the finest chapters to be written in the history of the Christian conquest of Africa is that of the *Fight against Fear*. Let me show you what it means, if I may.

Some years ago, about the year 1906, it was my privilege to baptize a young man who showed unusual intelligence, and who became one of our leading young preachers. He was transferred to another station, and I did not see him for some years. One day he came to the missionaries and said: "I have a very important thing I want to talk to you about. Did you know that

BAPTIZING CANDIDATES JUAPA RIVER, AT MONDOMBE.

BAPTIZING CONVERTS—MOMBOYO RIVER, AT LOTUMBE.

my father is a *Nkum?"* They were very much interested, because this *Nkum* constitutes one of the most interesting and picturesque figures in the whole African social life. It seems necessary to use his native name, because we know no equivalent. The *Nkum* is what you would think in the beginning was a very powerful chief. But you find that he is a chief without authority. Then, as you come in contact with him a little more, you think of him as a sort of high priest of their religion, but it is not very long before you find that he is a high priest without any religion. It is difficult to comprehend just what the *Nkum* really is. At least one may be safe in saying that he is a sacred character among the *Bankundo.* He is always very picturesquely ornamented with the skins of a certain animal, a sort of beaver, which is held sacred to his use, no one else being allowed to wear it. Tied about his waist are the skins of perhaps a dozen or fifteen of these animals, and he will have other ornaments of various sorts which go to make up his mysterious appearance. But the one significant thing which you always notice about an *Nkum* is his hat, because he wears a tall hat which they call a *botoolo,* woven in the finest basket work, and having on top a beautifully burnished brass plate.

Now in the setting apart of a man to be an *Nkum,* after endless ceremonies, too numerous to recount here, the crowning moment is when his head is shaved and this *botoolo* hat is put on his head. When the pseudo-coronation is completed, he is a sacred man in the eyes of the people everywhere, and his sacredness seems to consist largely in this hat, as from that moment until the time he dies, he must never take off that hat in the presence of the people. When he goes to bed at night,

he is allowed to replace it with a tightly-fitting skin cap, but never in public is he allowed to remove the hat. So sacred is this man that when you meet him you must not give him the greeting which you give even to a great chief. You must not say anything to him at all. What you must do is just to clap your hands together twice, and then he says: *"Bika! Bika-e!*—Live! It is permitted to you to live," and after that you may talk with him as with any other ordinary human being. He eats only special kinds of food, and if, while the food is being brought to him, or while he is eating it, the sun shines on it, or the shadow of a person falls upon it, he cannot touch it; it has to be thrown away. So sacred is he that he may go into battle and kill anyone on either side, but no one ever dares to harm him.

And when this young evangelist had told the missionaries a little more about his father, the *Nkum,* he said: "Now what I wanted to speak about, White Men, is that my father is becoming very much interested in the Gospel. When I first became a Christian, he drove me out of the house, but you know these last three years I have been located in our own village, and he has gradually become more friendly, and he comes and sits outside of the church and listens, and very frequently asks me to read the New Testament to him. At last my father is just about ready to become a Christian, and he wanted me to come and ask you something. He wants to know, if he comes to be baptized, whether you will ask him to take off that hat of his." They told him something like this: "Nsöme, when you have been reading your New Testament to your father, did you ever read to him some of those passages where it says that when we come to Jesus we

must give up everything, even father and mother, for His sake?"

"Yes, White Men, I have read it to him a good many times, but I will go back and read it to him again as your answer."

In the meantime, all the other *Nkums* had gotten word of the fact that this man, the father of Nsöme, was thinking of becoming a Christian. They went one by one to his house, and held a special gathering, and said: "Why do you want to become a Christian? Do you not know that if you are baptized you will have to take off your hat, and the people everywhere will lose their awe of us, and we will lose our exalted position, and the people will not bring us any more presents, and we will not be held in this reverential regard in which we have been held?"

He told them: "Now, I have been an *Nkum* for a long time, and I do not see very much that it has brought me. I have been watching the young men of our village. They are always fighting, always drinking, always gambling, always carousing. There is that son of mine. I drove him out of my house. Since he has come back, he never fights. I suppose he is the only young man in our village who never tries to kill anyone. He has only one wife, and I never hear of him quarreling with her. And most of all, this son of mine has been reading to me in that Book of the Words of God where it says that whosoever believes in Jesus shall live forever, and I am an old man, and I want this eternal life."

They coaxed him and tried to persuade him, and even threatened him, but, to make a long story short, he came down to the river's bank one day, and the people gathered in great numbers, because the word had gone

out everywhere that one of their sacred men was going to become a Christian. I remember how that day on one side were gathered together a little group of these *Nkums;* off to another side were gathered some witch-doctors; and then the whole bank there by the riverside was black with people, Christians and non-Christians, who had come to see whether or not this was really so.

Then Iyeeji Nkoi was asked that one simple question which we ask every candidate for baptism in every land: "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and your personal Savior?"

"Yes, White Man."

I could not describe to you how tense the atmosphere was. The *Nkums* and the witch-doctors really believed that if he took off his hat, fire would come out of the heavens, or something equally miraculous, or that some calamity would befall the tribe. Without any formality, he took off his hat and said: "White Man, take it." Then he was buried in the waters of baptism, and arose to walk in what was for him real newness of life. The story spread everywhere in that immediate neighborhood, and was carried by messengers and traders as they went up and down the river, how the *Nkum* had taken off his hat in the sight of hundreds of people, and no harm had come to him. The tale was told about a hundred evening fires in as many villages, and the Word of God literally ran and was glad. He became a strong influence in his village, and would often take off his *botoolo* hat to show that no more superstition remained. Every once in a while he would come to us and talk about the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, and about things which were difficult for him to understand. And they were numerous, for no one

tries to serve the God of the free soul against such a background without taking much of it into the new life.

Some years passed, and one day Nsöme came to the station looking very much worried. He said: "White Man, have you heard that my father is very sick? It is pneumonia. He has just had written to me a letter from our village. He thinks he is going to die." Because we loved the old man so much, I proposed that we should gather the Christian young men of the village, and ask that they bring the old man, so sick, to the hospital at Bolenge. But Nsöme said that that was not necessary, because he was already on the way. The young men of his own church were bringing him. He said: "White Man, that is not the thing that is troubling me. Perhaps there is one thing about this *Nkum* custom of ours that you have not heard. Did you know, Teacher, that no one of these *Nkums* has ever died a natural death?" Then he explained to me that when a *Nkum* becomes very aged, or when one is sick and about to die, they always have an assassin there, hired to do the killing. He is usually of the despised *Batswas,* who are serfs to the *Bankundo.* He stands over the dying man with a sharp dagger in his hand, and when the *Nkum* is thought to have arrived at his last breath, then the signal is given by the oldest *Nkum* who is present, and this assassin stabs him quickly through the heart, so that he will not die a natural death. Nsöme was very much worried, because, as he said: "White Man, you know these *Nkums* and witch-doctors have all been so angry in that my father became a Christian. I am afraid they will kill him on the way."

I was wondering whether we ought not to send out some people to see that he got in safely, when, looking down the path, we saw them bringing the old man in

on a bamboo litter. So I went up to him and gave him, I realized for the last time, that salutation due to his rank—two claps of the hands. He had changed his traditional answer, and said instead: "White Man, may Jesus save you."

It was too late to get him to the doctor, and putting one hand in mine and the other in the hand of his son, he breathed his last. Thus Iyeeji Nkoi went out on that great adventure into the land where there is no more fear—the first *Nkum* in all the history of their race, as far as we know, to die a natural death.

CHAPTER VII

With Healing in Its Beams

HOW names do cleave to lands! And how graphic some of them are! It has come to be that the mere mention of Africa brings the sensation of darkness. For "Darkest Africa" is a very meaningful title. It is preëminently the land of the black man. Of its estimated one hundred and fifty millions of people, there are only a small per cent without some trace of negro intermixture. It is the land as well of the darkened mind and the somber soul. Nor are the deeds which have written its history of any lighter shade. The Caucasian and the Ethiopian alike have a most unlovely past in African annals.

Yet for the central part of the continent sunshine is the normal climatic condition. It rains early and often, if it be the season, but the clouds seldom withstand long the beams of the sun. The native peoples notice this. They feel themselves to be the children of sunshine, and continued cloudy weather always has a depressing effect upon their spirits. When the sun shines brightly after a period of dull weather, it brings to them the delight we know when we see the first flowers of May.

So it was with a feeling akin to discovery that I noted the other day that the marginal reading of that familiar verse from Malachi is: "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise

with healing in its beams." * For this dark continent is *a land of many diseases.* Some of these are so clothed in mystery as to stir the imagination, but that does not take from their deadliness or from the suffering they cause.

Those who picture the untutored savage of a country like Africa as living in a land of plenty, his virgin strength untainted by the debilitating ease of civilization, and with the physique of a Greek god carved in ebony, have another guess coming. Instead of any such idealistic condition, it is a land of foul and repulsive diseases, a land of mysterious and apparently incurable diseases. So many of them are loathsome and disfiguring, and while Africa may not be, in just the sense in which David Livingstone meant it, "the open sore of the world," it is a country where the literal open sores and ulcers of the people are always crying for healing, and no one may ever be long in a crowd without sensing the stench of those foul sores.

Every traveler or resident in this part of the Tropics notes the reverence paid to aged people, or those who have the appearance of age. More careful observation reveals that at least part of the reason why gray hair and baldness are so respected lies in their rarity. The per cent of infant mortality is unbelievably high, and those who reach comparative old age are so few as to be remarkable. Disease, in some form or other, is the chief reason for this condition. And here enters the missionary doctor. We are coming in these days to what may well be regarded as a new conception of the medical missionary's task. In the past we thought of him perhaps too much as a pioneer, who was to make way for the coming of the Gospel, and to open the

* Malachi 4:2.

hearts of the people for its reception because of his winsome ministry of healing. And no doubt that pioneer service does bulk large. In almost every land he has made straight the paths for the coming of the King by means of his healing ministry.

Nor must we forget that which the medical missionary does for his colleagues who are engaged in the other types of missionary service. They have to depend upon him in every time of need, and in paying heartfelt tribute to their unselfish care for their comrades, I am only expressing the gratitude and appreciation of all who have doctors in their stations. This is especially true where there are children. What a difference it makes in every way when children play beneath the palms and mango trees! And when one of those little ones is taken sick, how comforting it is to know that all we need to do is to go a short distance to our doctor's home, and he will be there at once to relieve the little sufferer.

Possibly we have been a little inclined to forget that Jesus Christ came to transform every phase of human life and interest and activity, and quite likely we ought to think of the work of the medical missionaries, not only as an opening wedge for the glorious Gospel of our Lord, but as being in a very real sense a part of that many-sided Gospel. Every fresh study of the New Testament reveals how large a part of Jesus' work was healing and benevolence, and of how much meaning the Gospel story would be robbed if all that referred to this part of His work were taken away. Nor should we forget that one of the most noteworthy things said of Him in the early apostolic preaching was that He went about doing good.

There is still another side of the medical missionary's

task which we are thinking about in such a way in these days that it almost represents a new conception of his task. That is the fact that his work may well be regarded as a laboratory for the scientific knowledge of all the world. The diseases which are incurable today may be curable tomorrow because of the researches of some lonely missionary doctor in the heart of the forest there on the Equator. And surely, if there be those who are wondering where they may contribute their lives where they will count for the most in a world which has in it much of suffering, they need only to think of all the winsome ministries of the Christian physician, as he goes to take to such a land the principles of Jesus, the Gospel of the Sun of Righteousness, which goes always "with healing in its beams." That is to heal the hurt of Africa.

Now these medical missionaries who go to Congoland find their task very much accentuated because of another picturesque and interesting figure in African society—the witch-doctor. He is not only the sole representative of religion, but also the only representative of the medical profession. He has many ways of dealing with diseases. One of his favorite ways, if you have a pain anywhere, is to cut into that particular spot and let the pain out. For instance, when a man has pneumonia, he cuts a number of gashes in the sides of the patient, to let the pneumonia out.

Sometimes with open sores and ulcers he has another method. All the people gather together and the witch-doctor will be there, all dressed up, trying to make himself look as hideous as possible, and succeeding to a remarkable degree. The witch-doctor commences to dance around the person who has the ulcer, let us say, on his hand. After he has danced a long

time and the people are getting more and more interested in his dancing and wondering what it all means, suddenly he will say: "Stretch out your hand." The man stretches out his hand and the witch-doctor looks at it very fixedly and says: "I see a terrible thing in that hand. It has caused that sore. By my mighty power I will take that thing out." Quick as a flash he will put his hand down to the open ulcer and pull out a little green snake, which he has had hidden in his hand all the time. Well of course that impresses the people, but how much it heals the ulcer is another question.

But after all, his real method of healing is by charms. If you have a headache, you rub a charm across your head. If you do not sleep well, you hang a charm at the head of your bed. If the lady of your choice does not wish to wed you, a love charm must be sought. For these charms you pay a fabulous price. And I do not need to tell you the futility of these charms. However, the witch-doctors are often so feared that before the medical missionary can do the things for which he is so well fitted, he has to demonstrate that his power is greater than that of the witch-doctor. But the medical missionaries do have opportunities to show that their skill is greater than that of the witch-doctor. Among the repulsive and loathsome diseases, one of the most common is the Framboesia or the "raspberry disease," so called because it causes ulcers on the face and other parts of the body, ulcers which look very much, at the beginning and also at another stage, like a raspberry, When a person's face gets covered with these ulcers, I do not know of anything more repulsive to look upon than they are. If these ulcers get into the eyes, they are apt to cause blindness.

All through the years even the best skilled doctors

had not been able to do anything with this particular disease. They were only able to give the people some sort of a wash which would palliate the disease and lessen the pain and itching. One day there came word out to our mission station that a doctor somewhere had discovered an absolute cure for this disease, which in Lonkundo is called "*Manga.*" After some months the first medicine of this kind arrived at our station. When it came, the doctor sent out into the village for the worst case of which he knew. There was a young man about seventeen who had been having this disease for years, and it had spread over almost his whole body. He was just one reeking mass of sores. The doctor told him about this cure, and said to him: "Are you willing to try it? Our men of great wisdom in America and in Europe tell us that it is an absolute cure for *Manga.*" The young man replied: "White Man, I am just death itself. My people have driven me out of my home. The only things I get to eat are what they throw to me, and I live in that abandoned hut over there which people say is full of evil spirits. They are likely at any time to drive me out into the forest, or to throw me into the river to get rid of me. If there is anything you can do for me, for the sake of that Jesus you are always talking about, please do it."

A large crowd of people gathered around while the doctor fixed up the first injection, and he said to them: "You see all those ulcers on this man's hands and face and head? You come back here a week from today and you will see that these ulcers are commencing to go away." My, you should have heard the contemptuous laugh which went up from those people, most of them heathen. "White Man," they said, "do you not know that we have been seeing this disease ever since our

great-great-grandfather's time, and that no one has ever cured it?"

But they came back at the end of the week, and sure enough, already they could see that the outer edge of these ulcers was drying up very perceptibly, and four weeks after the first injection had been given, this young man found his skin just as soft and smooth as the skin of a child. And the witch-doctors withdrew farther and farther into the interior. No charm, no sleight-of-hand, nothing of superstition which they had ever been able to manifest, was able to stand before that which seemed to those people an evident miracle; and the medical missionaries thus made it possible for the Gospel of the Son of God to come into the hearts of many of these people.

These medical missionaries in Africa have sometimes very remarkable experiences. One of them had brought to him once a man who was suffering from lock-jaw. The people said to him: "Here is a man who cannot open his mouth." The doctor said at once: "Of course, he has lockjaw." "Well," said the people "we know that. What we want you to do is to take something and pry open his mouth." The doctor said —you know how doctors are, they want to explain everything just so—he said: "There is nothing the matter with the man's mouth. There is probably something the matter with his foot—stepped on a rusty knife, or something." The people laughed him to scorn. "We did not bring him here for you to talk about his foot. We want you to open his mouth." But the patient made signs for them to examine his foot, and it was found that he had stepped on an old rusty spear point, thrown out in the forest. The doctor had to tell them that no one could do anything for that

man, as he was too far gone, and that in two or three days he would be dead. The people went away, and sure enough, in two or three days the man died. Then they came back to the doctor and said: "Doctor, we knew you were a great healer, but we did not know that you were a prophet. Now we know that also." The doctor told the people to be on the lookout for more cases of lockjaw, as the wise doctors of his land had a powerful medicine for it, but it must be given as soon as the disease developed.

Two or three weeks went by, and in the meantime the doctor was able to send to the coast and get some Tetanus serum. When it arrived, he reminded the people that if they found any more cases to bring them to him at once, because he wanted to be sure of getting the case in the beginning. So about three weeks afterwards, they came one day, very much excited, and said: "Doctor, there is a case of lockjaw in the next village. We want you to go. We will carry your medicine for you. We would like to see you cure this kind of a disease." The doctor hurried out to the next village, which was about three or four miles away, and when he got there he found the sick person to be a woman. He also found that instead of lockjaw, she had a dislocated jaw. He immediately took a towel and wound it around his thumbs, and in that skillful way which doctors have, with one quick spring of the fingers he snapped the jaw back into place. Then he said to the people: "That is all." The people said to him: "Are you not going to give her any medicine? Did we carry this medicine all this way for nothing?" "No," said the doctor, "I am not going to give her any medicine." "Well, isn't she going to die?" "No, she isn't going to die"—and the woman, to prove it, commenced to

talk. Then they said: "Doctor, we knew you were a wonderful healer, and we found out that you were a great prophet. What we did not know was that there are two kinds of lockjaw; one which men have which makes it impossible for them to open their mouths, and another which women have which makes it impossible for them to close theirs!"

There is another way in which the power of the witch-doctor has been broken over and over again, and by which the power of superstition in their lives is being driven out. There was a young girl who came to the mission school. She learned to read and write, and came to church and learned something of those stories of the Gospels, and commenced to think about becoming a Christian. But about that time her father sold her as a wife to a heathen man. This heathen husband said to her: "When you were a girl, and in your father's compound, if you wanted to go to school or to church, it was all right. Now you are my wife, and you are not to go any more."

After a while a child came to them, and he told her: "Now whatever you do, do not take that child near those white people. I do not want any harm to come to it." But every time this girl had an opportunity, she carried the child up to the missionary, who had been her teacher, and showed her the beautiful baby boy, and asked her advice about taking care of him, because she was anxious for him to live and not be sick, for this terrible husband of hers would blame her if any harm came to the child. She did not stop going to church, but went secretly. Her husband found out that she had been going to hear the "Words of God" again, and was very angry. He beat her, and threatened that the next time he would put her in the stocks. But she kept on

coming secretly, because something of the power of the Gospel had gotten into her young heart. Then one day the little child fell sick. There was no witch-doctor in our village, but some of the old heathen women came to her husband and said: "Your child is sick because your wife has been going up to hear the Jesus story. Tell her she must not go there ever again." Her husband beat her more severely than before, and admonished her: "Remember, if this child dies, you die."

That night, the little child was burning with fever, and the mother did not know what was going to happen. Toward midnight we heard on our door a gentle little tap. *"Ol' anko na?"* "Who is there?" *"Emi, Bondele."* "It is I, White Man." We let her in, and she told us how her husband had threatened her and how sick the baby was. We called one of the missionaries who was a nurse. She came in and looked at the baby and said that it had a good deal of fever, but that there was nothing serious the matter—just a little stomach trouble. So the nurse gave the baby boy a warm bath and a dose of castor-oil. (You never could imagine what wonderful evangelistic agents soap and castor-oil are!) Then she said to its mother: "This baby ought to have some goat's milk." "But you know, *Mama,* that our people think milk is the food of the evil spirits. My husband would not allow me to give the baby any milk." "Well," said the nurse, "we will give it some milk here." She took some milk, put a lump of sugar in it, and gave it to the poor little thing. (Part of the witch-doctor's medical practice is to starve the patient.) How it did drink the milk! Often after that the mother brought her baby at night, and five days afterwards he was just as well and happy as could be, playing around on the ground with all the other babies.

How the heart of the mother "danced with joy" as they say in her language. The heathen husband, who really loved his wife, and especially loved the baby, was glad too. The mother waited for three or four months and then she told him how it had happened. The next Sunday he came to church also, and today he and his wife are Christians, and they are building there near one of the mission stations a really Christian home. And that baby, now seven or eight years of age, comes always and unforbidden to the mission school and to the church.

"For not with swords' loud clashing,
Nor roll of stirring drums,
But deeds of love and mercy
The heav'nly Kingdom comes."

CHAPTER VIII

In the Shadow of Death

HERE in the homeland my heart turns ofttimes away to that other land and to its Children of the Forest, for those dark-faced people who dwell in the heart of Central Africa are dusky also in heart. Theirs is a land of perennial sunshine; but children are they all, children of the shadow of death. How little life has for them! And how bitter, oh, how bitter a testing to them is Death! For they abide ever "in darkness and in the shadow of Death."

Death never loses its mystery or its awe in any land or clime, but its terror is most evident among the child races. Nearly all the curses which are so abundant in the Lonkundo language have some reference to death, for it is the one overmastering fear. If it were not so terribly pathetic, it would be almost amusing to listen to some old woman, angry because a street dog has stolen a dried fish from her scanty supply. She tries to run after the rogue, but expends most of her breath in shouting after him: *"Bwa! bwa! bwa!"* "Die! die! die!" And in some sense, difficult for us to comprehend, she believes that her curses have in them the efficacy of death-dealing. So the white preacher has to be careful, as he speaks of sin's penalty, to make sure that his choice of words betoken no more than the moral majesty of God's law.

And yet, in spite of their fear of death and all the mystery surrounding it, they did have one faint glimpse of the light. In those other days before the Gospel of Immortality went to Bolenge and Longa and Lotumbe and Monkoto and Monieka and Wema and Mondombe, if we had been traveling in that forest land, we might one day have stumbled upon a unique scene.

Leaving the narrow footpath and coming out of the undergrowth, we would see the bamboo houses in long lines. But a sudden awe comes upon us as we see that all are deserted, with crude implements lying about as if dropped in flight. Silently we pass along the vacant streets until we come to where a giant palaver tree spreads its boughs over the center of the village. Seated in a great circle are the villagers, but all in silence—the silence of grief—all their heads bowed on hands folded on their knees. Within the circle a most dramatic scene is being enacted. In the midst of a group of chiefs and elders and witch-doctors, a man lies on a low bamboo cot. His head is ornamented with a great *botoolo*—the primitive crown—below which white hair shows. He is the aged *Nkum*, the sacred man of the district. About him the chiefs and elders and witch-doctors stand with hands outstretched toward the heavens, and their lips are moving. Can it be that they are praying? Yes, they are, as nearly as I have ever known these primitive folk to come to praying. Over and over again they are pleading with God as they know Him. "*Nzakomba,* do not deny him!" What can it be they are asking for their dying *Nkum?* If that might happen which could only happen once in a thousand times, and just at the moment the sacred old man breathes his last, a clap of thunder might be heard, then you would

understand. For the eldest of the witch-doctors would leap with joy, shouting: "Did you hear? He is ascending!" And at the next clap all would shout together: *"Aokita! Aokita-e!"*—"He has reached it! He has reached it!" For that thunder betokens to them the opening and closing of some sort of an eternal home, into which the spirit of their *Nkum* has entered. But he alone could enter. And all the millions would still sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Some years ago, in company with one of the medical missionaries located at Bolenge, it was my privilege to visit a distant section. Day after day we journeyed, until finally we came to a large village. As we entered, the people fled in terror. Having coaxed them back, we were chatting with them about our reason for coming to their town, when a boy came running from the other end of the town, saying: "Our chief wants you white men to come to his house. His younger brother lies there sick unto death, and he thinks maybe the white doctor can heal him."

So away to the chief's house we went. Little better was it than the other bamboo hovels of the village. About six feet high was the ridgepole, and the door about two feet high. Bending low, we crawled into this tiny portal; and when our eyes had gotten used to the darkness—for no light comes into their houses save through this low door—we looked about us.

There in one corner lay the sick man, writhing in pain, on a mat. All the rest of the house seemed filled with forty-five or fifty women, the wives of the sufferer, who sat huddled together crooning already the song which they sing in mourning for the dead. The doctor leaned over the young man, made his examina-

tion, then, standing up, said: "It is only a question of time. In a few minutes he will be dead."

Can you imagine a moment like that? There he lay, looking for the first time into the face of a teacher of God! And never in all his life had there ever sounded in his ears the name of Jesus! And here he was, so near to death that he could never speak again! Kneeling by his side, I tried to pour into his dying ears the story of the all-saving Christ, who saves all and who saves at all times. Whether he heard or not—whether to his fading consciousness came any realization of the meaning of the burning story of redeeming love—I shall never know here. All I know is that as I spoke to him he leaped almost to his feet, after the manner of his fathers, and then from his foam-flecked lips came the awful death-yell, which seems to ring in my ears even today. Then, limp and repulsive, he fell back on his mat—a dead man.

> "Out of the joyous sunlight of this earth
> Through the dark portals of the second birth
> Into the limitless Unknown, alone!"

As we stood there, too horrified to think, much less to speak, suddenly all those women, who had been crouching there crooning the death-song, leaped to their feet with that plaintive, heart-piercing cry so familiar to every missionary in that land: *"Ngoya aye! Ngoya aye!"* Then one by one they went out through the little low door into the daylight. They tore from their bodies the little clothing they wore, until they stood there in the sunshine as they came into the world. They rolled on the ground; they ran hither and thither as if demented; they compelled the little son of the dead

man to clasp the cold body from which he shrank in terror. Then from their lips burst the most awful series of curses and maledictions one could imagine coming from human lips. They cursed the chief of the town, the brother of the dead man, heaping maledictions on his unhappy head, saying: "You were jealous of our husband, and so you had him murdered. Let it come to pass, then, that the first time you go into the forest a leopard shall take you! Or dare you ever go down to the riverside, let a crocodile bear you away to death!"

Then they cursed themselves, saying: "We are his glory, and for that reason he has been taken from us. Let no one ever hear again in our homes the sound of laughter or the cries of children! Let not even a smile ever be seen on our faces. Let us know nothing but sorrow and pain and tears and sickness, and let us die quickly."

And finally they cursed God as they know Him, crying out as the night came on: "You who call yourself *'Nzakomba,'* you devil! Our husband was handsomer than you are, and so you have murdered him!"

Thus the night fell, but no calm came with the darkness, for all through its weary hours they made the air hideous with such cries and maledictions. Not that real grief was absent—far from it. Custom demands these paroxysms of grief, and the terror of death impels these maledictions. But back in the hut crouched the real mourners, and all night long one who listened could hear beneath the yells and the wailing, their low, sad, plaintive chant, led by the bent old woman who in travail had brought him into the world.

And yet—and yet—if only one dared to complete the story, and describe the foul orgies in which these newly-

made widows figured before the dawn. But too hideous would be the recital; so we draw the curtain, only stopping to remind ourselves of one fact: This is what death means when it comes to a home there in that land, in the very shadow of death, when to that home the Lord of Death has never come!

But my memory goes back to another time in that country of the Congo. Another of the medical missionaries sat with me on our veranda as the sun went down—a golden ball of glory. We saw coming up one of those palm-arched paths which make the beauty of Bolenge so famous, one of the members of the church. She was a woman in whose life one might see daily the fruits of the Spirit, and usually in her eyes gleamed the light of the New Life.

But this evening her face was sad, and when she had exchanged with us the greetings of the day, she said to the doctor: "Teacher, somehow I do not seem to feel strong any more. I wonder if I have any disease?" He asked her one or two questions, and then gave to her that which seemed to be the most hopeless verdict a physician could give to any patient, for he said: "I am sorry to tell you, for you have been just like a child to us, but you have the sleeping-sickness."

Hopeless, did I say? Yes, verily; for of all the hopeless maladies which curse this poor old humanity of ours, this is the worst. Its origin and cause—no one knows. The insect which propagates it—a creature of darkness and of mystery. And its cure—God alone knows. Villages there are where five years ago a thousand people dwelt, and today, search as you will, you cannot find a hundred, all on account of this sleeping-sickness, the scourge of Central Africa.

When this woman heard from the lips of the white

doctor the confirmation of her own forebodings, and turned away, choking down the sob which came into her throat, she knew just about what her fate would be. She knew that she would grow thin and emaciated, a mere shadow of her former self. She knew that the good desires and impulses which had been implanted in her heart by the Gospel of the Son of God would one by one depart, until, instead of going about in neat, clean clothes, she might revert even to the old shameless nakedness. And more than that did she know.

She knew that some day, when she would be sitting, perhaps talking with her friends, her head would fall and she would be asleep—asleep in a dull stupor like that of a drunken man. Yes, and even more than that did she know. She knew, as the disease increased in its ravages, that after a time her mind would go also, until she would become a sullen idiot or a raving maniac, trying to burn the houses of her friends, or even to take their lives. She knew that in such hopelessness life would drag on its way till at length death would come slowly, wearily along to end her misery.

The next day I was in the village. I did not mean to be an eavesdropper, but happening to pass by her house, and hearing a voice as of one in sorrow or pain, I stopped a moment and listened to this woman praying. I have heard some people pray in this land and in that, who as they pray seem to reach up and grip the very throne of God Himself; but I have never heard anyone pray just as prayed this poor Child of the Forest, as in this Gethsemane of hers she poured out her soul in a very abandon of petition. Somewhat on this wise she talked with God:

"O, my Father in heaven, Thou hast said that I must die, and Thy will be done. But there is one thing I

want to ask of Thee. When my mind goes away with this sickness, do not, oh, do not let me bring disgrace on the name of Thy Son by cursing Him or denying His words!"

And so with one burning sentence after another she pled and agonized for only this one thing, that when she no longer realized what she was doing, she would not be permitted in her ravings to bring shame on the cause of Him who had saved her with so great a salvation.

It all came to pass just as we knew it would. Soon she was daily at our door. Modesty and cleanliness knew her not again. Long hours did she sleep in the sun—rags and dirt were her portion. And now wonderful, now fearful, were the things of which she babbled and raved.

Finally one morning they came running to say that if we wanted to see her again, we must come at once. I remember how we stood there in the gray dawning of the morning, the tears dimming our eyes as she lay with her head upon her husband's knee. We spoke together of her faith and patience, and of all that her life had meant to us and to the native church. Just then that happened which almost made us smile through our tears, for just on the borderland, our Father granted that back to her should come her mind as clear as it had ever been. Looking up into her husband's face, she said:

"I've been crazy, haven't I?"

"Yes," he replied, "you have been crazy a long time."

Then she asked—and who could imagine the infinite entreaty in the question?—"Have I cursed my Savior? Have I denied Him?"

"No," came the answer, "you never have."

For God had answered her prayer. Then over her face shone "the light which never yet was on sea nor land," as she said: "All right, I'm going home." And her soul went away to that land from whence the shadows are fled, where there is no sickness like this, and no heart-break, and no partings, and where the great Father of Love shall wipe all the tears away.

For that is what Death means, when even in that land of shadows and under circumstances such as these, it comes to a home where has come first the Lord of Death, and over its rude door has been written Faith's challenge:

"O death, where is thy victory?
O grave, where is thy sting?"

CHAPTER IX

A Congo Helen

IT was the siesta time on Sunday afternoon at Bolenge. Suddenly I was awakened by the *Koom! Koom! Koom!* of the war drum, coming from down-river. I dressed hurriedly, for that sound always spells trouble. Soon natives were pounding on the door, crowding on the veranda, and calling: "Come quickly, White Man. Inganda and Bönsöle Wankánza are fighting."

This meant serious trouble, for Inganda is the first village down-river from Bolenge, and Bönsöle the first town back toward the interior from there, with bad blood between them for long years. Besides, Inganda and Bolenge have an alliance cemented by relationship and blood-brotherhood. Even as these things flashed through my mind, the sound of the war drum changed from the monotonous deep-throated war-call to a rattling message in Lonkundo code! Before I could ask the meaning of the code, the drum in front of the chief's house at Bolenge rang out the emergency call, and I knew instantly that Inganda was sending an S. O. S. message to Bolenge, asking for help from her ally.

Knowing action must be instantaneous, I put on my sun-helmet and rushed out into the village. As I ran I heard the rushing sound of many feet as all of

Bolenge's warriors gathered in the open space before the *böngömbö* of the chief. I saw that I would be too late if I tried to get to the chief's house, so I took a short cut through the women's gardens of cassava and maize, and reached the only path leading to Inganda just in time to block it as the Bolenge warriors rushed down it. They were led by Ejim'eambe, so old that he trembled as he ran, but in his eyes was the gleam of battle, and he gave every evidence of being well worthy of his name, which means "Bad Old Man."

They came to a stop as they saw me blocking the narrow footpath, and shouted to the chief to come to the front of the file of fighters. As he had known me for a long time, the chief of Bolenge looked a little sheepish as I asked: "Is'ea Ngene, what is the meaning of all these weapons and this haste?"

"Our ally has asked for our aid, so we are going to help Inganda fight Bönsöle."

"No, you are going back to your houses. Not one of you passes this way. Are you crazy? Do you not know that the days of fighting are over?"

"But we will die of shame when it be known among the villages that we deserted our ally."

"There will be no fighting. Back to your houses at once!"

Some of the fiercer ones, incited by the Bad Old Man, said: "But we will pass. Who is afraid of one white man?"

"Come on. I have lived these many years among you, and have you seen fear in my face? Come on and see if it is there now."

Back to their homes they went, grumbling, driven by the wiser ones and their chief.

As Inganda had heard the answer of Bolenge's war

drum, they had by this time ceased their S. O. S. call, and resumed the war-call. The call-drum is made of a section of a tree trunk, sometimes as much as six feet in diameter, hollowed out and beaten for code messages with two sticks, for the war-call with but one. It is the African wireless, and can be heard on a clear day for over ten miles.

All the way to Inganda I could hear this drum, louder and more insistent. On the way, one of the young men in our employ was telling me the cause for the war. It had all come about because the chief of Inganda, Njöji y'empampanga, had enticed away the favorite wife of Is'ea Njöku, the chief of Bönsöle. This was not only a personal affront to the chief of Bönsöle, but an insult to the whole town, and bitter feuds in past years made war seem the best way of wiping out the insult.

I remembered the woman in question. Mbela was her name originally, but she was now known as Nyango ea Njöku, for the custom is that when the first child is born, father and mother change their names. So when their son, Njöku, was born, they became the father and the mother of Njöku, the heir to the throne of Bönsöle. That she was the mother of the chief's heir made her being stolen by the chief of Inganda an even more serious offense. I recalled how she looked as I had seen her last—a rather nicely formed woman, with the red *ngola* paint in a thick coat from head to foot, her only clothing a brightly colored loin cloth, her hair rubbed full of the same *ngola,* and with it wrought into fantastic shapes. She was wearing the spiral anklets which clanked as she walked, and around her neck was the heavy brass collar, the collar and anklets being tokens that she was the favorite wife. The collar must have

weighed fully thirty pounds, and the anklets about fifteen. With that recollection came the thought: "And that is the sort of beautiful creature for whom my siesta has been disturbed, and on whose account I will likely have a bad fever as a penalty for running in this hot sun—worse than that, unless I get there in time, blood will flow. Thinking of Mbela of Bönsöle turned my thoughts to Helen of Troy, and of

> "The face that sunk a thousand ships,
> And burnt the topless towers of Illium."

The picture of this Congo Helen made me wonder to myself if that Helen of classic fame was really as beautiful as legend would have us believe!

About that time we came into Inganda village, for it is only two miles from Bolenge, and we had only two swamps to cross. Against the sound of the war drum could be heard the piercing, blood-stirring note of the *elonza.* This is an iron gong about two feet in length, filled with jagged pieces of iron, and beaten with an iron rod as fast as human hand can strike. Its sound—that is not to be described, save to say that when one hears it, he feels like hitting the man nearest to him!

The village was deserted, except for a few women scurrying into the forest for safety, for the warfare of the jungle recognizes no non-combatants. We hurried through the lonely streets, passed entirely through the town, guided ever by the sound of the *elonza,* and soon we heard the sound of loud voices, and knew that we were near. We reached the *bolelo,* the boundary line between the two villages, and found the opposing armies drawn up on each side of the line, shouting curses and maledictions at each other, for no African

is satisfied to kill his enemy unless he expresses his opinion of him first! Except indeed he slay him from ambush.

So anxious was I to avoid bloodshed that I hurried up between the opposing lines. There was just room between the tips of the spears for me to pass, but this did not require much courage, for both sides were my friends. It was most unusual for Africans to fight out in the open in this way, with no ambush or concealment, but white civilization perhaps had had a little effect on their methods. Yet, except for five or six old muzzle-loading cap muskets, one end of which is as dangerous as the other, the weapons were those of the centuries long past—the heavy thrusting spears, the lighter throwing ones, the curious curved knives, the poisoned arrows. As I came to the center of the lines, I saw that both chiefs were there, facing each other, and giving each other insult for insult. Someone shouted to them, *"Bala Bondele!"* "Behold the White man!" They turned, with no welcome in their looks, but courteous even in time of anger; they in turn called me by my name of honor, *"Engambi ea Njambola,"* and gave me the greeting due to one of equal rank: *"Losako!"*

When I had greeted them in the same courteous fashion, Is'ea Njoku said: "What are you doing here? Say what you have to say quickly, for we are going to fight. We have no time to hear the Jesus story today."

His opponent said: *"O ngökö,"* "So say I."

"But I have come to stop this battle."

"No, I have been insulted, and only blood can avenge."

"But the Governor will hang some of you for this."

"Never mind, we will fight first, and see about the hanging afterward."

Entreaties, appeals, threats—all availed nothing, and I saw that the anger on both sides was turning itself against me. Desperate measures seemed to be required, and an inspiration came to me. Whipping out note-book and pencil, I said: "All right. Fight you may. But first I will make a list of the leaders for the Governor, so that he may know whom to hang or shoot for this. There is Njöji y'Empampanga, who started all this palaver; Is'ea Njöku, chief of Bönsöle; Löngömö, one of his sub-chiefs; Iluku, sub-chief of Inganda; Böfekö, Ngombo, Iseka, Bonteku"—choosing alternately from each side, and writing the names rapidly.

But the chief of Bönsöle soon said, with fear in his voice: "White Man, what are you doing?"

"Taking down your names for the Governor."

"White Man, when you come to my village to preach, do not I give you my own house, gather all my people together, and listen with them as you tell to us the wonderful Jesus story? Do I not always listen to the Words of God?"

"Yes, but . . ."

"And here you are taking away my spirit!"

Then it was all out. Little fear had he of hanging, but writing was unknown to them until the white man came, and somehow the superstition had grown up that to write down one's name caused his spirit to go to the writer.

"But there must be no fighting. Agree to arbitrate this question, or I take all your names."

Terror was written large on all the faces near us, and tears came into the eyes of old Is'ea Njöku, veteran of

a hundred battles, while the chief of Inganda even trembled, for he knew that the old men of his village would now blame him for this new trouble, while the witch-doctors would ascribe every misfortune to my taking their names and spirits. So an armistice was soon agreed upon, and both sides consented to come to Bolenge on Tuesday to decide the matter. I started away, but all shouted: "The paper! The paper! The white man carries away our names!" Tearing out the leaf from the note-book, I started to give it to the chief of Bönsöle, as he was the older man, and age is a thing to be reverenced in Africa, but the other side set up a howl of dissent, so I tore it in two and gave a half to each, with mutual satisfaction. So back I went to my anxious wife, tired and wet and hot; but satisfied.

Soon the sun went down over beyond the broad Congo, the moon shone down upon the peaceful villages, and the drums beat merrily away, sending out the code messages that the war was over.

On Tuesday the disputants came to Bolenge. This part seems like an anti-climax, but it must be told, for people always ask: "But how about the woman—that Helen of the Forest? How did it come out?" From nine in the morning until four in the afternoon they wrangled, with no result, and I arbitrated, all in vain, the Mission work all neglected, and no siesta. Tired of the never-ending discussion and mutual recrimination, late in the afternoon I leaped to my feet and said: "You chiefs and elders, listen to me. Never will this affair be settled in this way. Both of these men want this *bolole*—this good-for-nothing woman. Let her decide."

Instantly a howl of protest went up, for woman among them is only a chattel. But I insisted that it was

the only way, and finally they agreed. So I spoke to the woman Mbela, who sat looking very unconcerned in the shade of a *bouma* tree, but who nevertheless felt very much concerned, and told her to stand up. Then I gave her a lecture long to be remembered on wifely obligation, and on her duty to the children whom she had borne to Is'en Njöku. How the men slapped each other on the back in joy as they heard me blister her, and call her everything but a lady. In closing, I told her that she ought to return to her former husband, but that she was free to go to the new one, should she so choose, for she was not a slave.

Mbela cast a look at husband and children, but stepped over and sat down beside her new lover, while the men smote their thighs and said: "Isn't that just like a woman!"

Usually in such cases there is a long wrangle about the price, for a man buys his wives and always claims to have paid more than he really did. But in this case everyone knew what Is'ea Njöku had paid for Mbela, as he had paid for her the record price of eighty thousand brass rods.* So I said to Is'ea Njöku: "You paid eight ten-thousands of rods for Mbela. Njöji y'empampanga shall pay nine ten-thousands for her—one ten thousand as a punishment. Let no one ever call her again the Mother of Njöku, but by her old name of Mbela. She shall return to her father's house until every rod be paid." Calling her father to draw near, I took Mbela's hand and placed it in his, while all the elders said: "O *ngökö.*" "So let it be."

Both the contestants came to shake my hand as they

* A brass rod is a piece of brass wire about eleven inches long, bent in the shape of a hairpin, and worth approximately one cent.

went away. I threatened Njöji with all the threats I could think of if he enticed away any more women, and to Is'ea Njöku I said: *"Ng'ole elele a ntando, wete esösö ey'omoto"*—"Like the storms which come suddenly upon the Great River, so comes the fickleness of woman." He assented gravely as he gave me his parting salutation; but was I mistaken, or did I see real sorrow written in the deep lines of his impassive face? Other wives and many had he, but somehow one felt as if the fierce old warrior had some real tender love for the mother of his first child.

CHAPTER X

Africa's Contribution to the World

ONCE we thought only of Africa as "The White Man's Burden." And in a very real sense it still is. However far the native herald carries the torch into the weird interior of his native land, that torch will have to be lighted at the divine fire by the white man. In those earlier days we concerned ourselves chiefly with wondering what we were going to do for Africa's peoples.

But we have come to new conceptions. We realize that peoples and nations act and react upon one another. So people are asking, and with much insistence: "What is Black Africa going to give to the world? What is to be her contribution? What of her life is to flow into the great common life of the world?" For we cannot get away from the fact that the opening up of such a mighty continent is bound to make its impact upon other continents.

Is it in the field of music? All who have heard the American Negro sing would so affirm, and with much reason. Or is that contribution to be a new Emotionalism? Perhaps. Or yet is it in Oratory that the colored race is to make its most distinct contribution? As there comes back to my ears today the flowing sentences of an Nkundo preacher, pleading in persuasive tones with his people to accept the Life that is Life indeed, I could easily so believe.

Discussing this question, Mr. Brawley says that two facts are observable:

"One is that any distinction so far won by a member of the race in America has been almost always in some one of the arts; and the other is that any influence so far exerted by the Negro on American civilization has been primarily in the field of esthetics. To prove the point we may refer to a long line of beautiful singers, to the fervid oratory of Douglas, to the sensuous poetry of Dunbar, to the picturesque style of DuBois, to the mysticism of the paintings of Tanner, and to the elemental sculpture of Meta Warwick Fuller. Even Booker Washington, most practical of Americans, proves the point, the distinguishing qualities of his speeches being anecdote and brilliant concrete illustration." *

There are two fields in which I am sure the Children of the Forest may make some contribution. The first of these is Folklore—a department of literature in which the colored man has already made significant contribution, as witness the "Brer Rabbit" tales of Uncle Remus.

I would like to suggest that the grown folks skip these next pages, for I am going to tell the children a story. It is one which all the boys and girls in my part of Africa like to hear. This story is about a little turtle, whose shell is about six inches in diameter. I want you to be sure to learn his name. It is an awfully easy name. His name is *Ulu*. He is the hero of all the animal stories they have among my people over yonder. "Brer Rabbit" among the Bankundo becomes "Brer Ulu." They have lots of stories about him, but one will have to suffice for this time. Of course you know that in these stories they make the animals talk just like people.

* The Negro in Literature and Art, by Benjamin Brawley, p. 4.

One day *Ulu* went out to the edge of the forest, and when he had reached the forest he went just a little way in, and there, towering above him, he saw a great big *Njöku.* I wonder if any of the children can tell me what that is? I expect you have seen them at the Zoo. All the boys and girls where I live know what an *Njöku* is. It is a great big animal, with large, flapping ears and long white tusks. An elephant? Of course! *Njöku* is an elephant.

"Now," said *Ulu,* "do you know what I came out in the woods for today? I came out to see which one of us is the stronger." You ought to have heard the elephant laugh. "You little *Wimaka"*—(*Wimaka* means anything of which you do not know the name. You pick up any article, and if you cannot think of the name of it, you ask, "What is this *Wimaka?"* It is considered quite an insult to be called that.) The elephant wanted to be insulting, so had said: "You little *Wimaka,* don't you know that if I took one of my feet and put it on you, no one would ever find you again?" But *Ulu* made it plain that he had not come to fight, that what he proposed was only a trial of strength between them. He said: "If you will meet me here at the edge of the woods tomorrow morning, I will bring a long rope with me. You will take one end of it, and I will take the other, and then I will pull you right into the river." The elephant laughed again, but his pride was involved, so he agreed to the trial.

Immediately *Ulu* hurried as fast as his little short legs would take him toward the bank of the Congo River, which is six miles wide in front of our station. When he came to the edge of the river, he saw a big fat *Ngubu* drowsing on a sandbank in the sunlight. Can anyone tell me what that is? That is easy, for he looks

exactly like a *Ngubu.* A hippopotamus? Right again! When *Ulu* saw that great big lazy hippo out there in the sand, he said: "Now, *Ngubu,* I came down here to propose a trial of strength between us." *Ngubu* is very lazy, and did not think it hardly worth while, but he finally said: "Well, if you want a trial of strength, we will have it." "All right," said *Ulu,* "I will come down here tomorrow morning and bring a long rope with me. I will give you one end of it and I will take the other, and I will pull you right out on dry land." *Ngubu* opened up his mouth wide, and roared with laughter. *Ulu* said: "All right, laugh now, *kie-kie,* but I will show you tomorrow." And so it was agreed.

Next morning bright and early *Ulu* came with the long rope and took one end of it to the forest and gave it to the elephant. Then he took the other end of the same rope and gave it to the hippopotamus, not letting either of them see anything but the one end. Then he placed himself in the middle and shouted to *Njöku,* the elephant, *"Njöku! Njöku—o! Njö! Belaka, ekeke eokita!"*—"Elephant, pull, the time has arrived!" Then he trotted over toward the river and shouted to the hippopotamus: *"Ngubu! Ngub-œ! Ngu! Belaka, emekelo eokita!"* "Hippo, pull, the trial of strength has arrived!"

Then *Ulu* went and hid himself while the elephant pulled his end of the rope all day long, and the hippopotamus pulled his end, and they just pulled and hauled and sagged from morning till night. Neither one was able to budge the other, because one was just as strong as the other; and all day long *Ulu* sat near the middle of the rope, under a nice shady tree, laughing because he had gotten the great monsters of the forest to pull against each other. When the sun went down they

gave up in despair, and *Ulu* went to each in turn and said: "Didn't I tell you I was the stronger?" They had to admit it, because neither one knew that he had pulled against the other. Each one thought that the one on the other end was the little turtle.

So much for *Ulu*. May it not be possible also that the Children of the Forest may call us back to a more simple and direct faith in Jesus Christ, and in His message?

On one occasion, in the church at Longa, the preacher chosen was a young man named *Itökö*. For the background of his sermon, he had selected one of those prophetic pictures from the book of Revelation, which are described as already having occurred. He read the passage, and, as he read, the glory and the mystery grew and grew upon him. A second time he read it to an audience breathless with interest.

"Brethren," he commenced his comment, "that is what the Book of God says. I wasn't there!" For to him the Book was the final word.

One day the wife of one of our elders had a quarrel with her husband. Even Christian couples in Africa do quarrel sometimes, I am sorry to say. She was very much younger than her husband, and probably he was rather unreasonable also. At any rate, they had a bitter quarrel, and after he had gone to work, she said to herself: "I am tired of the way he talks to me, and I am going to run away to my mother in the next village and perhaps I will find a new husband there."

The only way they have of carrying anything is in baskets on their backs, so she packed her few belongings in a basket and started into the forest. She had gone only three or four hundred yards when she saw stretched across her path a big *Nguma* snake, a python

about twenty feet long. He had coiled his tail around one tree and his head around another, and was stretched right across her path about three feet from the ground. You know how well women have liked snakes ever since the days of Eve. She gave just one yell, and hurried back home. She asked her husband to forgive her and take her back again, though she had made up her mind to leave him for good and go back into heathenism and be as bad as she possibly could be.

We have a custom in our church at Bolenge that whenever anyone has done wrong or attempted to do wrong, they are to get up in the Saturday night meeting and confess their sins, for we try to restore New Testament discipline. The next Saturday night this woman arose and told of the incident, and said: "Now I know that the Lord saw that I, the wife of an elder in the church, was going the wrong way, so He sent that snake to keep me from going into sin."—And who am I that I should say the Lord did not send that snake? The only thing I have to say is that it seems to me the supply of snakes must be running short in some regions!

One of the greatest satisfactions of taking the Gospel to a people like that is the fact that when the Gospel comes to them, it seems to them like a real message from God. When they hear the Gospel, they just take it for granted that it is true. Whenever you read anything to them from the Book of God, that is what God says about it, and that is the end of the matter. Over and over again their faith rebukes ours.

I remember that among those men who were sent at different times from the churches as evangelists, especially those sent to take the Gospel to other tribes than their own, was a young man by the name of Long-

wango. Practically all the evangelists are young men, because they understand the Gospel much more readily than the older people, and also learn to read and write with less difficulty. We sent this preacher, at his own request, to one of the most picturesque tribes in the whole central part of Africa, the *Ibinza* people. We call them the "African Gypsies," because they do not care particularly about living in villages. Each one of them has a canoe of his own, and their canoes are different from those of the other tribes near them. They are very small and light canoes, and if they like, the owners may pull them ashore at night to take better care of them. The *Ibinza* people never like to get very far away from the water, or very far away from their canoes. They seem to sleep happier if they can touch their canoes during the night. There seems to be almost the same affection between them and their canoes as there is between the Arab and his horse. After you have ridden in one of them you wonder how it is that anyone could have an affection for those egg-shell-like canoes. They float very beautifully on the water until you get into them, and then you think every minute you are going to be capsized. But the *Ibinza* gypsies are almost as much at home in the water as they are on land, so that part does not worry them very much. They spend the biggest part of the year wandering from place to place, living in their canoes and trading with other people; but they do have some headquarters. High up the Ngiri River there is a little tributary creek which goes into a lake, and on the shores of that lake they have built their straggling villages. It is a very swampy region, and one where, if you want to visit your neighbor, the only way to do it is to get into your canoe and go to visit him.

It is very difficult for the *Ibinza* to raise anything to eat, on account of floods and wild animals. One elephant can ruin many gardens. Because of this, the *Ibinza* are subject to frequent famines. Hunger is common to all the tribes, but this is one of the few regions where actual starvation is to be feared.

It happened that the first time this young evangelist went to preach to them, they were having one of those periodic famines. The water had risen higher than usual, and had drowned out their gardens and driven away the elephants and buffalo upon which they depend for their meat; fishing was also impossible at this season. It should be said that they are great fishers and hunters. So it came to pass that when Longwango reached the first *Ibinza* villages, he found them very different from most African peoples. He was from the neighboring tribe of the Bobangi, whose language they understood. But instead of being hospitable and willing to receive any visitor who came to them, they were surly and ungenerous, and did not seem to care whether they heard this Gospel or not.

The evangelist went on for a few days toward the high waters of the Ngiri, visiting their villages, until he saw that they were in a very serious predicament, because the people were really dying of hunger. While he was there, some of the children died because they had absolutely nothing to eat. As the food he had brought with him was all gone, the evangelist saw that the only thing for him to do was to start down the river as soon as possible, and get out of the famine region. So he made a brief visit to the lake and started down the Ngiri River. He went two days without any food whatever, and at evening of the second day, he stopped at the last of the *Ibinza* villages, for he thought the peo-

ple there might have something to eat. He started to ask them to sell some food, for he knew it would not do to ask for gifts. But they were so hungry that when they heard him asking for food, it made them angry, and they began shooting arrows at the evangelist and a young boy who was with him. Instead of finding anything to eat, they had to get into their canoe in a hurry and paddle down the river. They paddled that night and the next day without any food, and the next night when they were paddling, it seemed as if their strength was exhausted, and that it was impossible for them to go any farther.

They laid down their paddles, and the young boy, who was not a Christian, asked the evangelist: "What is it that you are always preaching to the people about when we have been having meetings? Did you not read in that Book of yours that if anybody who believed in Jesus Christ would ask for something, He would give it to him?" The evangelist, speaking about it afterward, said: "I felt as if that was a message from God himself. I knelt down in the bottom of the canoe, and asked God if he would send us something to keep us alive that night, because I knew that the next day we would reach our own villages, where there was food."

Somehow, when he had gotten through praying, he felt confident that something was going to happen. He had prayed only for a little bit of palm-oil—one of their standard articles of food. It seems strange, but when he had finished praying and they had picked up their paddles with new strength, one of the paddles struck a floating object, and the boy said: "Look, there is a pot of oil floating in the water!" And sure enough, there it was. Longwango commenced pulling it toward the canoe with his paddle, but the boy was fright-

ened, and said: "The evil spirits have sent that. There will be some terrible thing in it, perhaps poison. Perhaps it would cause us to be crazy. Let us go on, no matter how hungry we are. Let us not touch it at all." But the evangelist said: "I asked my Father for it, and He has sent it to me. Why should we not take it?" He lifted it out of the water. I do not pretend to explain how it came there. All I know is the story as they related it to me.

Telling about it later in the church, Longwango said: "We sat down and ate that little bit of palm-oil. As I tasted the first of it, I commenced immediately to realize how little faith I had had after all, because when I prayed, I only dared to ask for a little *ntobu*" (a poor grade of oil, which the poor people eat) "but I found upon tasting it that the Father, who always gives us better than we ask, had sent us the rich, red *nkolo* oil, which only rich people can afford."

Now Longwango believes that the Lord sent that pot of oil, and who are we that we should say He did not send it? "The earth is His and the fullness thereof." You know, friends, I wish we could pray like that. We need mighty badly a hospital at one of our stations. If we could pray like that, I just believe we could have that hospital. Then we need a doctor, and the nurses, and if we had some people who could pray like that, I think we would have them. We need fifty thousand dollars for the opening of two new stations. We need the men and the women, the doctors and teachers and preachers and builders who are going to open those stations. One of them is to be located in one of the most populous regions of the whole Congo country, among one of the bravest and most virile tribes ever found there—one of the few tribes yet un-

touched by the terrible scourge of sleeping sickness. And I am sure that if we knew how to pray, the Gospel would go to those *Bambole* people, and get there before the sleeping sickness reaches them.

I wonder if one of the contributions which the African church is going to make to us is not to be an enriching of our faith, so that we will really take God at His word, and believe that He means what He says? And among the choice expressions of that richer faith may be a more vital conception of prayer as

> "An element
> That comes and goes unseen, yet doth effect
> Rare issues by its operance."

When the African Educational Commission made its report to the Foreign Missions Conference last year, that great African, Professor J. E. K. Aggrey, closed his very remarkable address with these significant sentences:

"The sea of difference between you and us should be no more. The sea of our failure to bring any contribution to the Kingdom of God shall be no more. You white folks may bring your gold, your great banks and your big buildings, your sanitation and other marvelous achievements to the manger, but that will not be enough. Let the Chinese and the Japanese and the Indians bring their frankincense of ceremony; but that will not be enough. We black people must step in with our myrrh of childlike faith. . . .

We look for a Christ who loves all men, who came to die for the salvation of the whole world; we believe in God as a child believes. If you take our childlikeness, our love for God, our belief in humanity, our belief in God, and our love for you, whether you hate us or not, no matter who

does right or wrong, then the gifts will be complete—the gold and frankincense and myrrh.

"God grant that you who have heard this report and this plea from Africa will trust us, will come and educate us, and will give us a chance to make that contribution to the world which is in the design of God."

CHAPTER XI

The Burden Bearers of the Jungle

ONCE upon a time we went on foot from the Congo River to the Bussira. Our caravan moved along the jungle path in Indian file. Suddenly we met a native *bölöngö* going in the opposite direction. They squeezed themselves into the wall of greenery, for the path was only wide enough for one person at a time. Their caravan was a characteristic one, composed of one man and a number of women. The man carried only a light spear, for was he not the master as well as the protector of his harem? But each woman carried a heavily loaded basket on her back, and several had children strapped to their hips as well. In the line two little girls marched, each with a basket proportional to her age, while a boy about the same age brought up the rear, in his hands only a bow and arrows.

When you have seen that picture, you have seen Central Africa. The wide world around women bear even yet, many of the burdens of life, but in the jungle, womanhood's burdens are obvious and evident, as well as heavy. For this land of Africa is not only a land of fear and a land of disease, but a land of cruelty; and you see this more, I think, in the way in which they treat the women and children than in any other way. A woman there is a part of a man's property. When he counts his possessions, he always enumerates his

NDONGIBONJI—A BURDEN BEARER.

wives. And a wife or daughter or sister may be bought and sold and rented and traded just like any other chattel. The Congo man is cruel, not only because of his primitive, callous nature, but because he is owner and master. Unrestricted authority begets harshness and heartlessness.

Now you can never understand the life of a people such as these who are dwelling in the heart of that forest, until you understand that the central custom of their social and family life is polygamy. A man is not even supposed to be married until he has at least two wives, and may have five, ten, fifteen, a hundred, two hundred and fifty, four hundred, or even more, according to his wealth and position; because a man's social status in a land like that is determined by the number of wives he has.

Polygamy, when one first hears about it, seems rather a comical sort of thing. For instance, they have a custom, so binding that it is a law, that no man can look his mother-in-law in the face, and neither can she look him in the face; and if a man had four hundred mothers-in-law, you can understand that it would keep him pretty busy dodging them so as not to look any of them in the face. A man can talk to his mother-in-law, but he has to turn his back to her, and she turns her back to him, and that way they carry on a conversation. I do not like to mention this, because there are many people who might think that there are some customs in Africa which might well be introduced into civilization!

But when you really understand polygamy, you do not find anything very funny about it. When you come right down to it, it is no joke to have fifteen wives—either for the women or for the man.

The chief of our village came to me one day and said: "White Man, haven't you noticed how thin I am getting?" I did not look up because I was very busy, and he came to see me often. But he insisted: "Now, White Man, look at me." Whenever you want to show how thin you are, you always hold your little finger upright. So he held up his little finger, and said: "Do you not see that I am getting just as thin as this?" Well, of course that was somewhat of a hyperbole, to say the least. But he was a little thinner than usual, so I said: "What is the matter?" "Well," he replied, "every one of those eighteen wives of mine have gone on a strike. They will not, any of them, give me anything to eat."

Now I was secretly rather glad of that, because he was always coming up to the house and telling me how much better off he was with his eighteen wives than I was with only one, but it was my duty to listen sympathetically, so I asked him to tell me what it was all about. He said: "White Man, I want to go out first and get every one of those *belole*—those good-for-nothing women, and I want them to listen while I tell you, so they will be ashamed and never do such a thing again." Pretty soon he brought all his wives. I sat down on our porch; one of the wives carried a convenient stool for her lord to sit upon; and the women sat as best they could upon the grass, because no one ever considers an African woman of sufficient importance for anyone to bother about where she is sitting.

Then Is'Ekomba began to tell his tale, with much feeling. As he always stutters when excited, his oratory caused the children to roll on the ground with mirth. He told how all these wives of his had gotten

together in secret council, and had made a vow that they would never give him anything to eat any more. He waxed eloquent in his indignation, but took care not to go into the reasons. After he had told his story, and had seated himself in virtuous dignity, one of the younger wives arose and said: "Now, White Man, we want you to know the truth of this. Has our husband told you why we are starving him?"

The chief said: "White Man, do not believe anything those women tell you. They have had their *bolenga,* and will only tell what they have arranged in that secret council! They are starving me for no reason."

I reminded him that it was ever the way of the white teacher to hear both sides of any question, and try to get at the truth of the matter. Then, and then only, would he decide who was in the right, and rub on the victor the white ashes of vindication. Then I said to the wife who had spoken: "Loota, tell me all about it. Am I not the father of you all?" So she commenced back in the beginning, and laid bare the whole incident. I found out afterwards that she told the truth.

While these men very frequently, and I might say, always, despise their wives, nevertheless the wives are the bankers of the family. Some months before this, it being the time of the great fishing season, the chief had received a good deal of money in tribute from the people of the neighboring villages, as he controlled many of the best fishing places, and no one could fish in any of them without paying for the privilege. One day be brought five hundred brass rods, the currency of the country at that time, each one of which was worth approximately one cent, to this woman who was

speaking, and had said to her: "Now you take care of these for me."

According to the usual custom, she had taken the rods and shown them to her mother and to some others, to make sure that they knew just how many rods had been given to her. Then she took them to the forest and put them in the bank—that is, went to a very secret part of the forest, dug a hole in the ground, and buried them there. Some three or four weeks before the day she told me all this, the chief had come to her, according to another very common custom of these polygamous men, and said: "Where are those *thousand* rods which I gave you?" *"Ngoya-e!"* A *thousand* rods! You never gave me any *thousand* rods, you gave me only *five hundred.*" *"Etumba-e!"* exclaimed Is'-Ekomba, "I know what I gave you; I gave you a thousand rods." But she replied: "Certainly you only gave me five hundred. I will call my mother and the others who saw them, and they will tell everybody that you only gave me five hundred brass rods."

It was not very long until they were having a real quarrel. When a man and wife in Africa have a quarrel, everybody in the village knows about it very quickly, because those bamboo walls are too thin for secrets to be kept within them, and besides, a quarrel is too good a thing to be kept for a husband and wife, so they usually take it to the main street of the village. And an African woman—the angrier she gets the higher she pitches her voice, so this little misunderstanding became quite generally known.

The quarrel went on for more than a week, and every day this chief would come to his wife and insist that she pay him a thousand rods. Every day she would offer him the five hundred, which she had unearthed,

but he would decline to accept them, insisting that he have all or none. Finally he became exasperated because he saw that she was not going to pay the amount he demanded, and threatened her with terrible punishments. But still she was obdurate. The other women kept saying to her: "Don't give in to him, because if you do we will all have to do it as we always have had to do."

When the chief saw that the usual tactics were not availing, he resorted to a stratagem, not at all uncommon with African husbands. He went to the forest and chose a large, stout vine, placed it in the form of a noose around his neck, then climbed a tree in front of his wife's house and announced he was going to hang himself. That is the way you get even with your enemy in the land of the *Bankundo*. You hang yourself right in front of his house, and then your ghost will haunt him. It probably is a mighty good way to get even, but it has always seemed to me slightly inconvenient.

After he had climbed up there, he gathered the people together and gave them his parting messages—told them how to carry on the affairs in the village after he was gone. His younger brother was to be chief after him, because there they have the collateral succession, from older brother to younger brother. When he had given all his instructions, he bade all his wives good-bye except this particular one, and then commenced to sing his death-song.

Well, I have always wondered what would have happened if she had been able to hold out and let him do it, but about that time some of the village women began to cry, and the old men began to wail about what a wonderful chief he had been, and the younger brother

threw himself down in grief. Finally her sister-wives said: "It is no use, you will have to give in." So this poor woman had to sell everything she possessed—because among people like that, with so little property, five dollars was a tremendous sum—in order to get together these five hundred rods and make up the thousand rods which he claimed to have given to her. But when she had paid it, then these women held a caucus, and said: "This is the last time," and they went on a hunger strike; that is, they put him on a hunger strike.

In civilization that would be a small matter. If a woman declined to give her husband anything to eat, he could go to a restaurant or a cafeteria and get something to eat in a hurry; but in heathenism there are no hotels or lunch counters or anything of the sort. If your wives refuse to give you anything to eat, you go hungry. In the first place, all the farming is done by the women, so all the food-stuffs are in their hands. It was not very long, therefore, until this chief was really hungry. More than that, the women's attitude was known to every person in the village, and the children sang derisively of him as he went along the street.

After we had talked it over, he promised that he would not do this any more; but I did not tell you this story for that reason. I bring it to you that I may put it over against another incident.

I wish you might go with me along one of those narrow paths which I have mentioned as being the sole medium of communication between those different villages, until we come to where there is a path leading off here to the right. But that path is closed. They have taken branches and woven them together so that the entrance to this path is tightly closed, and you would find hanging there, in this land of mystery and super-

stition, perhaps a half dozen different fetishes and charms. You could not get any heathen person to touch one of those charms or to enter into that secret path for any sum of money, or any reward which you could possibly offer. Neither could you coerce him into going, because those fetishes which seal its entrance have been hung there by the witch-doctor, and are the kind which no unhallowed hand may touch.

But because we belong to this white race which has, through the years, been fighting this wonderful fight against fear, we do not care about the fetishes; we tear them away and trample them under foot; we clear the branches away and go along the forbidden path. We need only to go a short distance to see that the mysterious path is descending into a dark glade. Just a little light comes from where the sun manages somehow to force its rays through the interlocked branches above; and in the middle of that particular glade you will see a little hut, not more than four feet high, made by stakes driven into the ground and all of them brought together in conical fashion at the top, covered over with leaves. You look into it and find that it is filled with bones, *human bones.* For here in this glade you are beholding

> "Those trees in whose dim shadow
> The ghostly priest doth reign."

Here is where the witch-doctor has his headquarters, and where he makes his charms. Over yonder they show you where a woman was tied down. They drove great stakes into the ground, then put strong ropes about her wrists and ankles, and tied them to those stakes. And if, at the edge of that little glade, you see the beginning of a column of driver ants coming

out of the forest, you may guess at what happened to that woman. These soldier ants of Africa, which march in great columns, perhaps only a half an inch wide, do not look like anything to be dreaded at all. But you watch them coming—their numbers no man ever counted, and the end of that column never has been found. They kept coming on and on toward that woman, and . . . The next day, where once there was a woman, only a few bones were to be found.

When they had told me the story, and pointed out that the last bones in the conical hut were hers, I asked: "But what foul crime did this woman commit, that this terrible punishment fell upon her?" "White Man, she disobeyed her husband publicly." That—and nothing more. Seventeen years ago that happened, but since then much has been changed. In those days, before the Gospel of Jesus Christ came to that land, that is what would have happened to every one of those women—either that, or some kindred fate. No husband would ever have permitted that those women should have dared to stand up and defy him, to have seemed to have had any personality at all. A woman in Africa is not personality. She is property, and even in the little conception they have of a future state, they deny women any part in that future life.

It is very wonderful to us who have lived long years among them to see the hour striking when womanhood is coming into her own, and girlhood is nurtured and protected. And no appeal could come with more force to the chivalrous heart of the Christian Knight than that which calls him to do battle valiantly for the coming of that hour. All that Jesus has brought to mother or sister or wife or friend, He is to bring to the womanhood of Central Africa.

CHAPTER XII

The Evangel and the Book

THERE comes back to me today a picture from that African life, of these people whom, having known, I have come to love. It was upon one of the mighty rivers, of which there are so many in that part of Central Africa. For three long days we had been battling against the current of that stream. But the paddlers, aided by their cheery canoe-song and the monotonous rhythm of the little *tom-tom,* had sent the dugout canoe steadily along.

The third evening, as it was nearing the sunset time, we rounded a curve and saw upon a little elevation at the side of the river a native village. Away in the background green foliage and palms were bending in the evening breeze. We had been wont always in going up this river to stop at the village, and the chief, old Is'a Mboyo, had always come with his people to hear our message. Time after time when we had spoken to him of Jesus Christ, he had come, his aged head bowed and hardly able to walk because of the years that had come and gone, and said: "White Man, you are not treating me right. I am an old man, ready to die. You say you have come here to break the bread of life. You give us only crumbs. It is very hard to understand. You talk just as though we knew everything about the Words of God, and we do not know

anything. Cannot you make it a little plainer? Because I am old and I cannot hear as I once did, neither can I understand as when I was a young man. Make it plainer, White Man, because I am going to die pretty soon."

Over and over again I tried to make it plainer to Is'a Mboyo, and sometimes we had thought we saw even in his old face some foretokens of the breaking of the light. Each time we went away, he came down to the beach to bid us farewell, always insisting: "White Man, whatever you do, you must never pass us by. Each time you go up our river, you must stop and tell us the Jesus story."

This time we knew it was impossible for us to stop at his town—Nkombo was its name. There was a great market being held at a village three hours farther up river, where would gather many who had never heard the Gospel. It seemed so unusual an opportunity that we had sent on word that we would sleep there that night and preach to them. As we came to his town, we said one to another: "We should have gone over nearer the other side of the river, because when Is'a Mboyo sees us go by he will feel very badly."

It was too late. Bending swiftly to the task, the paddlers shot quickly past the village. As we went, we looked toward the town. It was the sunset time—one of those tropical sunsets never to be forgotten and never to be described. There, standing on the bank, silhouetted against the evening sky, was our friend, his head white with the years that had flown, his hands stretched out to us as if in petition. The last warm rays of the sun were falling in their rich colors upon his old face. Away across the waters came his voice, borne so shrilly to us. *"Locwa nko?" Lotobungaki*

nde?" "Where are you going? Have you forgotten us?" In sadness of heart he watched us as the canoe swept by.

Three weeks went by. Again we came to Nkombo town. When the canoe grated on the river bank, we thought that we should see him standing there to welcome us, as he had always done. But this time there was no welcome from old Is'a Mboyo. He had gone away to another land, from whence he could not return. Never again into his old ears would I have the privilege of pouring that sweet story of redeeming love. Is'a Mboyo is gone, but his words remain burned upon my memory—"Have you forgotten us?"

We have been hearing a good deal these days about the New China, the New Japan, and the New India. What about the New Africa? Do not the words of the old chief come home to us in winsome appeal? He asks us if we have forgotten those children of the forest. The words he spoke that day remind me of certain words in the Scripture, from the second chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, where it is recorded that when the wise men had departed, "behold the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying: 'Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.' "

There are two facts in this Scripture of which I want to remind you. The first is this: When God, in His kindness for the human race, wanted to protect the babe, Christ, whom He knew the cruel and treacherous Herod was seeking to destroy, He did not hide him away in America; He took him and hid him away in the continent of Africa. The second fact is like unto it: Today, nineteen hundred years after the day when

God hid away His Son, in the continent of Africa there are uncounted millions who have never heard the name of that Christ whom God the other day hid away in the bosom of their homeland. There are uncounted villages yonder in Africa where never yet has been heard the name of Jesus Christ. It is not for me to tell you about all those people. I come, instead, trying to voice an appeal for one tribe out of the many, the one whom it has been my privilege to know—the people of the *Bankundo*.

There are many problems one meets as he tries to win those Forest Children to Jesus Christ. The first is the problem of language. When you have organized a church in any land, and have commenced to train native ministers who know the New Testament Gospel, it is well to remember that you never will develop a strong church unless you put into the hands of that church, and especially of its ministry, the Book of God in their own language. And so, not alone for preaching the Gospel, but for translating the Bible, the first task which the missionary has facing him when he goes among the *Bankundo* is learning their language. Not only to learn it, but to learn it well, so that he may preach Jesus Christ as He is, and will be able in his translation of the Scriptures to bring to those people the real Word of God.

And all who know this forest land will tell you that the ability to speak fluently the native's own tongue is the key to his village and to his heart. How often has the face of the village headman changed from fear to perplexity and then to smiling joy as he heard his wonderful white visitor speak excellent Lonkundo! And how quickly a crowd gathers to hear the Message when the word goes through the town that the white

preacher speaks "just as we do." And how the elders love to linger with the missionary far into the night and ask questions regarding his land and his people and this religion of Jesus.

When the first missionaries went to Bolenge they found a language so musical, so seemingly blended together, that they could not tell where one word ended and another began. Now to learn a language like that is not as easy as it would seem when one first considers it. You must remember that this primitive people had no written language at all; that they had only a spoken language; and so when we wanted to learn it, we did not have the advantage of grammars and dictionaries and everything of that sort which one has when he goes to learn another language in America. We had only the people. There seemed but one way to learn their language—to listen to them as they spoke it, and then write it down. While they had no grammars, and, in fact, did not know that they had such a thing as grammar, and to this day do not have a word for grammar, their language is most grammatical, and is built around the most regular and inflexible rules of grammar.

We knew that we had this language of theirs to learn, and we thought that the best way to begin would be to ask them the names of things, and then write them down. So one evening we decided we would make our first attempt. We took our pencils and notebooks, and made up our minds that that day we were going to try to get some knowledge of the language of these pre-literates whom we wanted to help. We thought the best way to do this would be to point at things, for that is certainly the universal language, and then write down the answer in our notebooks.

Being evening time, the first thing which caught our attention was a lamp. We had noticed that when they wanted to know what anything was, they said: *"Onko na?"* "What is that?" So we pointed to the lamp—it was not an electric light, but a kerosene lamp—and asked: "What is that?" They replied: *"Bosai."* We wrote that down in our notebooks, *"bosai"*—"lamp."

The next thing we tried was a rough bench, which happened to be there on the porch. We pointed to it and said: *"Onko na?"* "What is that?" Again they answered: *"Bosai."* That stumped us a little. We could not understand how a lamp and a bench could be the same thing.

The next thing we pointed at was a tree. And they said that was *"bosai"* too. We commenced to get a little worried, but we remembered that a bench was made of wood, so it seemed quite the thing that a tree should have the same name.

We tried a man next. We pointed at him and asked what they called him. But they said *"bosai"* once more. We thought we had better make sure, so we tried a woman next. Sure enough, she was *"bosai"* too. We put our pencils in our pockets rather sadly, and looked over what we had learned that day. Here it was:

lamp, *bosai*
bench, *bosai*
tree, *bosai*
man, *bosai*
woman, *bosai*

About that time we commenced to get mighty perplexed. How were we ever to learn a language where everything was *bosai! bosai! bosai!* We decided not to learn it that night. But we finally found that the

trouble was that we did not know how to point. Every time we stuck out our finger and pointed at anything, they thought we wanted to know the name for finger, and they said: *"bosai"* "it is a finger!" Pretty soon after that we learned to point properly, because in our part of Africa, when you want to point at anything, you point not with the finger, but with the lower lip. It is not very pretty, but it works. And think how handy it is! One may put his hands in his pockets or be doing almost anything he likes, and also point at anything he wishes at the same time. After we discovered that, it was not nearly so much trouble to learn the language. If we wanted to know what anything was, we shot out our lower lips at it, and it was not very long before we not only knew the names of the common things which were about us, but we commenced to gain quite a large vocabulary.

But when we came to verbs, it was a considerably harder proposition. You cannot point at a verb as you can a noun, and we found that the only way was to act them out. When we wanted the verb "to sit," we sat down, and when we wanted the verb "to stand," we stood up, and the people watched with their mouths wide open with wonder, trying to find out what the white man was trying to do on this particular occasion. Then it dawned on them, and they said: "Why, that is *'kitanse'* and *'emalá.'* We thought everybody knew that!" To learn the verb for running, we ran; and when they saw us doing that, they probably began to think that the white man, whom they regarded as being so wise, was not quite "all there" after all. But finally they said: "Why, that is *'ukumwa,'* 'to run.' " And we obtained adverbs the same way, for when we wanted to know what "to run fast" was, or "to run

slowly," we just did it. In this way we were able to get pretty soon a working knowledge of the language.

You know, it is a very difficult thing to speak accurately and fluently the language of another race and to always remember to say the right word at the right time. One of my colleagues was crossing the Bussira River in a canoe one day, and as they were paddling across, they discovered an elephant swimming the river at the same time. It happened that they did not have a rifle or any guns of any sort in the canoe, but there were a couple of other canoes near by, and in one of them was a man having a very sharp fighting knife in his hand. The missionary happened to remember that he had read somewhere that if you see an elephant swimming a river, all you have to do is to wound him in the trunk, and he will be absolutely helpless, and will drown. So he shouted—or thought he did—to the man in the other canoe who had the knife, that he should cut off the trunk of the elephant that was swimming across the river. The man said something to his companions in the canoe, and they paddled quickly up close to the elephant. Then the man in the front of the canoe seized the elephant's tail, and with one stroke of his knife, cut it off, because the missionary had forgotten and said "tail" instead of "trunk"! That shows what mistakes are likely to occur when you are speaking the language of a people among whom you have not been born.

After we had gotten quite a little working knowledge of the language, we found that we were lacking still in some of the words that we wanted most of all, because we were anxious to make Christ known and to make Christ real to them; not so much to talk to them about the ordinary events of existence as about the deeper

things of their lives; and then we realized that in a sense the larger part of our task of learning their language was yet before us.

Think, for instance, of trying to find a word for "peace"—"the peace that passeth all understanding"—among tribes who prefer to fight; or of striving to find a really adequate word for "righteousness" among a people whose moral sanctions are quite foreign to us; or of being able to express the idea of purity of heart in villages where, as the little children play together in the streets, they talk in the most unconcerned fashion of things which you would not mention if you were a hundred years old.

And as we tried to translate the New Testament, we found that we lacked the most important word in the whole Christian vocabulary—we could not find an adequate word for love. Speaking seriously, the love which a man has for ten or a hundred wives will not express the love which the New Testament talks about. You cannot represent the yearning love of the Father, who loved so much that he gave His only begotten Son for us, by the love of plural marriage. No, you have to count that sort of love out. You have to put it into the discard. For three long years we looked for a word for love. All that time we were listening to the people, for, after all, the best way to learn the language of a people is not to ask them questions, but to try to listen to them in moments when they think you are not listening. Thus they will speak normally, without constraint and without self-consciousness, and express themselves just as they do when they are by themselves. After a long time we began to notice that those *Bankundo* mothers as they held their babies in their arms—motherhood is pretty much the same the

world around—were always using one expression as they spoke to those cute little brown-faced children of theirs, *"ok'eefe."* One day a missionary said to one of those forest mothers: "Please tell me what it is that you are always saying to your children—that *'ok'eefe.'* Is it some word of endearment that you have?" The mother looked at him rather reproachfully, and said: "White Man, is it that you have been so long here with us and you do not know what *'ok'eefe'* means? Have you not noticed that I never use this for any other children than my own? *'Ok'eefe'* means that I care for this little girl of mine so much that when I think of what is going to befall her when she grows up, for I know what women suffer among the *Bankundo,* I have so much affection for her that it hurts me." And immediately we knew that she had shown us the one Lonkundo word which adequately expresses the love which the Father in heaven has for us.

"Just one sweet kindly face,
A heart so filled with grace,
Gift of the One above,
A Mother, and her love,"

and this pressing, perplexing problem was solved. So in the New Testament, in the Lonkundo language, wherever in the English version you would find anything about the love of God, you will find that expression, *"ok'eefe"* which those Bankundo mothers use when they are speaking lovingly and tenderly to their own children.

For there is now a New Testament in Lonkundo;*

*The New Testament in Mongo-Nkundu, the British and Foreign Bible Society, London, 1921. Lomongo and Lonkundo are kindred tongues.

and that brings us to another phase of this problem—that of reducing their language to writing. Here also one learned some interesting things. Having never had any writing, the natives did not believe any such thing could be. One day one of the missionaries was sitting at his table writing a letter to his home. The chief of the village came in and said: "What are you doing?" The missionary explained that he would write on this piece of paper, and when his friends received it, they would know just what he was doing. The old chief replied: "You said you came over here to teach us good things, and here you are lying to us the very first thing." "I will have to prove it to you," said the missionary. "I will write on this piece of paper anything you say. You can then take it over to the white man in the other house, and he will tell you just what is written."

Now, the old chief was very fond of oranges; so he said: "Write, 'Give this chief six oranges.'" The message was accordingly written. About that time the chief began to experience a little faith, about the size of a mustard seed. When his missionary friend wanted to hand him the paper, he would not take it in his hand, but put it in the split end of a stick, and in that manner conveyed it over to the other missionary, who read immediately: "Give the chief six oranges." A boy was directed to give them to the chief, but by that time he was disappearing down the path. When the white man saw him a few days later, he started to joke him about it, but the chief said: "It is no joking matter. I do not want anything to do with a piece of paper that can talk!"

In the midst of such superstition the missionaries had a difficult task; but today the children of that chief,

several of his wives, and about one thousand people in that region are able to read and write.

One day one of the brighter boys watched as one of the missionaries wrote. Noticing his interest, the white man printed some of the letters of the alphabet in rather bold outline. Immediately the boy shouted to his companions: "Come here quickly. Our white man is cutting tribal marks on paper." So that day the word for write had its christening—the word *köta,* which expresses the cutting in the flesh of face and body those designs which indicate tribal origin. Small wonder that even yet writing is regarded in the interior villages as an awesome thing!

The reduction of the language to writing from the mechanical side was found to be comparatively easy, and our own alphabet was used, with the exceptions of the letters r, x, and q, which were not needed. H is used in only three or four words.

But the translation of the New Testament was a far different and a longer task. Not only had words to be found which would in some sense express the cardinal ideas of the Christian Gospel, but into them it was imperative to pour richness and meaning. The search for words as above sketched had to be extended to the whole area of New Testament thought. Through more than twenty years the work was continued, not being completed until 1920. Last year twenty thousand copies of the New Testament were sent to the Congo.

That you may see what this language is like, here follows the Great Commission, the last verses of Matthew:

"Ko Yesu aoy'el'iyo, aotefela l'iyo, aokela, Mpifo euma eokaem'el'emi nda loola la nd'okili. Nd'ewela eko lokenda, lolak'anto nd'enanga beuma wae bayaleme bakimi akami,

laine nd'asi nda lina j'Ise, ko la ja Böna ko la ja Bolimo wölötsi; ko bala, emi nde l'inyo bembile beuma, elaka nko nsukela ea ekeke."

Yet another thing remained to be done. I wonder if you can guess what it was? Not all the task was completed when the first printing-press commenced to turn out pages of Lonkundo. To be sure, it was a wonderful press, though small and run only by foot-power. In fact, the work was barely begun when the books were bound and ready for use.

One afternoon in a distant village the weary missionary was resting in the house of the chief. Many and long were the miles of jungle path over which he had come that day. And the swamps he had waded—how sticky had been the mud in the bottom—how their fetid odor lingered in his nostrils. Already the people had gathered once to hear the Story, and were to come back again in the evening. Out in the dusty streets where the sun blazed in pitiless glare a dozen children were playing. Drowsily at first he watched them. With split bamboos they seemed to be drawing pictures in the dust. Seemingly all at once he heard one of them say: "But that is not the way to make a 'b.' Let me show you." Going toward them quietly, lest they take fright and run away, he found that they were learning to write in the dust of the street, as long ago the Master wrote. One of their number had learned to read and write at the mission station, and wanted to teach his playmates. But they had no slates, so this other way had to do.

No matter how many books are translated and printed, they are of no use until the people are taught to read them. What a glad day it was when our first little Hymn Book, containing fifty Gospel songs, came

from the press! And later when some of the Gospels were printed, how the heart of the church glowed with joy and hope! But an even gladder day was that one which has dawned over and over again, when a young man or woman, and once in a while an older one, had learned to read those books.

The most common mistake made by the people in America is in thinking that the African cannot be taught. At one time I had a class of young men ranging in ages from perhaps fourteen up to twenty-two years. Those young men wanted to preach the Gospel. Knowing that they could not do so effectively unless they were able to read the Word, they came to me and said: "We have read the books of beginning. Now, White Man, teach us to read the Words of God, because we want to preach the Good News." When they had begun they could not tell one character from another, but in one year's time they could read a little stumblingly, and after a while they were able to read the New Testament.

A tremendous hunger, a very passion for knowledge, is taking possession of those people who have been won and in whose minds have been sown the seeds of knowledge. Instead of the old darkness, with its veil of superstition and all it entails, there is now growing up this young church; around it a growing constituency and its splendid, enthusiastic ministry, many of whom are able to read the New Testament, and also to write. God hasten the day when we shall be able to give them the whole Bible in their own tongue! No other contribution to their life can we make which will be quite so permanent as this, to have given them the Word of God in their own language. Missionaries

may come and missionaries may go, but the Word of Life abides forever.

"The Church from her dear Master
Received the gift divine,
And still that light she lifteth
O'er all the earth to shine.
It is the golden casket
Where gems of truth are stored;
It is the heav'n-drawn picture
Of Christ, the living Word."

CHAPTER XIII

Nature's Cruel Children

EIGHTEEN years ago I stood on deck of an ocean steamer. I watched the blue waves, as the sun danced upon their foam-flecked tops, and I yearned and hoped and dreamed. Long had been the voyage, and very far away yet was the land where I hoped it might by my privilege to speak to the people of the Christ they had never known. A hundred miles and more were we from the mouth of the Congo River, as I dreamed of the day when I should speak to its dusky peoples.

Just then one of the ship's officers touched my arm, and said: "Look! there is your Congo." I looked eagerly in the direction he indicated, where so lately the sun had kissed the blue waves of the sea, and lo, the waters of the mighty Congo River had already stained, dark and muddy, the water of the ocean. As I realized that so far out at sea the dark waters of the Congo River were so plainly to be seen, I thought of all that such a picture might portray—of those who dwelt along the banks of such a river; of dark-faced tribes, with hands red with blood; of a social life dark as midnight; of peoples speaking tongues which came as jargon to our ears, and dying of weird, unlovely diseases, and dreamed of how I should preach to them, and of their redemption.

One day the dream came true. One day I stood among these people. As the years came and went, and I came to know their life as it really was, I realized that the blackness and darkness of which I had dreamed were only the shadows of the reality.

Friends, back of the ignorance, back of the superstition, lies the cruelty of the primitive heart and the heartlessness of the African social system. Polygamy causes so much suffering, and slavery was so common that the barter in human beings was spoken of as the trade in "black ivory."

As I go along the streets of the heathen villages and see those foul, ill-smelling, blackened bamboo huts, and then, returning to beautiful Bolenge, pass through that part of the town which has become decidedly Christian and see there the splendid little cottages which have been erected by these men, over and over again I say to myself: "Here is a real miracle of Jesus Christ." To certain types of mind, miracles are difficult to believe, but to those of us who have seen the Gospel in action there in the jungle, no such difficulty exists. In the quaint idiom of Lonkundo, we have "seen with our eyes themselves." I knew Bosamb'aende when he was a wild cannibal breathing out threatenings and slaughter. I saw that man made over by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Master of men spoke peace to his turbulent heart, and he became a gentle, consecrated follower of that one Master.

It is hard sometimes to realize how cruel these children of mine can be, but the unrestrained heart is ever cruel, and nearly everything in the family and social organization of primitive peoples tends toward heartlessness.

One of the first villages of the interior to listen sym-

pathetically to the Message was Injolo. That was in 1906. The two evangelists who went there to locate knew that they were in the midst of a people given to brawls and murders. So a crazy man who walked often down Injolo's streets, brandishing keen weapons, did not add any to their equanimity. But they soon found him quite harmless, and, as they showed him kindness, he came and sat almost daily on their veranda. One day he failed to come, the next day likewise. Stealthy inquiry brought forth the reason. This insane man had been growing more and more troublesome to his relatives. One day his sister and her son induced him to accompany them into a forest. On reaching a secluded spot, they commenced digging a hole. The afflicted man asked for whom they were preparing it, but he received no response. As soon as the grave was deep enough, they seized him and buried him face downward, lest he should dig his way out.

This method of disposal of an insane person was, however, most unusual. For their animistic conception of the spirit-world has this much to its credit, that it generally protects such unfortunates. Insanity is supposed to be caused by evil spirits taking possession of the person, and so they fear to do any harm to the afflicted one, lest those spirits send retribution upon them. In many instances insane people come to be regarded with a certain superstitious awe, and usually no one would dare to touch them.

In the town of Böngönde the people wanted to get rid of the one crazy man they had, as he was most violent, and spent most of his time in scaring people. So one day the elders of the village met in solemn conclave, and the order of the day was the disposal of this man.

Poison, arrows from ambush, murderous charms—these and other expedients were cast aside as unworkable. But they found a way to rid the village of their troubler. A few days later nearly the whole village might have been seen wending its way into the jungle—it tells no tales. The forenoon was spent in digging a deep, yawning pit, and in constructing rude fence approaches to it, which finally converged to the pit. These approaches, when completed, made a long alley, whose sides slanted in until one going down it had no choice but to go into the pit. Then what a pandemonium broke loose as with drums and gongs and horns the entire village chased the insane man out into the jungle, like a pack of baying hounds after their quarry. The dénouement was simplicity itself. The terrified man ran like a deer down the blind alley, and tumbled into the pit. Dozens of hands pushed in the dirt, the cries and curses of their victim growing fainter and fainter, until a yellow mound marked where the pit had been.

Old age is everywhere respected, but this fails if the aged person be poor, without relatives, sick, or afflicted. The women are usually tender-hearted, but they, too, show an almost surprising callousness at the sight of suffering, if the person tortured be an enemy or an alien. Even the tiny children have to undergo the cutting of the tribal scarifications or cicatrices on their little faces and bodies by the "Artist in Blood" and to endure the chipping of their front teeth to make them resemble saw-teeth.

Woman, however, is the chief sufferer in paganism. After all, in African primitive life woman is not personality, but property. Her husband obtains her by paying for her, and no stay in Congoland makes one's heart unfeeling enough to see unmoved a lithesome,

graceful young girl, torn by force from her mother's arms to go as a wife to some vile old polygamist. Her husband may loan her to a friend; he may give her as surety for a debt; she may be rented out or sold, and it would be discourtesy to a guest not to offer him a wife. She could be beaten, put in the stocks, tortured, or put to death. Even the best husband would speak of any one of his wives as *"yomba iko ikam"*—"that piece of property of mine." When her father or husband dies, she has no part in the inheritance. On the contrary, she *is* part of the inheritance, and the customs regarding inheriting wives are as hard and fast as any other customs of the tribe. If you ask Bankundo men why their wives and daughters have no share in the family estate, the almost invariable reply is: "Grandfather, women are birds and fly away. We have no desire to see the family treasures scattered." For she goes where she is sold, loaned, or traded. And even her children are not her own! If any should be born before marriage, they belong to the male members of her family. After marriage, they belong to her husband. So every woman who has passed from husband to husband, has left a little of her mother-heart in each *jibala.* Here is the high point in the indictment of polygamy!

Man is cruel to woman yonder in the jungle because he owns her. It is a land where man is matrimonially inclined, but it is also a land where the man expects the woman to obey. If a man's wives are unruly, very likely he will take the most disobedient of all out into the sun under the equator and tie her down there on her back; then he will cut off her eyelids. There she must look up into the burning sun until she dies, or

until he mercifully relents and looses her, to go about blind and crazy to the end of her life.

How the chivalrous soul of more than one missionary has been stirred when he saw an African woman in the "slave-stick." Imagine a log ten or twelve inches in diameter, and perhaps fifteen feet in length. At one end of it is a natural fork, in which the woman's neck has been placed, after which a pin, driven through the two branches of the fork, holds her in this worse than prison. The weight of the log holds her in a sitting position all the time. It is doubtful if a white man ever saw a woman placed in the slave-stick, but the sight of the cringing, quivering woman as her husband is forced to drive out the imprisoning pin by resounding blows of a big club, shows him in some measure what she suffered when it was driven in. If she was unfaithful to him, the custom was to tie her down on the ground, and then for the village executioner to hack her body into two halves. She is *owned* and so must be faithful to her owner; her husband is not owned, and so owes no obligation to fidelity. In the fact of woman being property is to be found the secret of her being looked down upon. In Lonkundo if one wishes to brand a man as a weakling or a coward, he always asks him: "Are you a woman?"

One could hardly draw up too strong an indictment of the price-system of marriage as an incentive to cruelty, but at least one more count ought to be included. This is the inhuman treatment of the sick wife. Not that she is neglected or badly treated if but slightly ill. She is a valuable piece of property, and anyway her sister-wives or women friends are always there to take care of her. But let her become seriously ill, and there be any doubt as to her recovery, and the

situation changes. Her husband will nearly always take her at once to her father's home, where she may be nursed by her mother or other near relative. This is apparently quite considerate, but if you get underneath the surface, you will find that the husband and her father have already discussed the one serious question involved, viz., where is she going to die? For, should she die in her husband's house, he never could ask for the return of the marriage money. But if she die in her father's home, the latter has to return the money, unless some other arrangement has been made. So when the husband arrives with a sick wife at his *bokilo's* house, the father, brother, or whoever is the head of her family, demands at once that he be paid for taking care of the sick woman. If the husband pays, or gives a promise or pledge to pay, he has said to all that he takes all the responsibility for his wife. If he refuses, and the family takes her in, the responsibility is theirs. So it not infrequently happens that the poor creature, particularly if she be afflicted with some lingering disease, such as sleeping-sickness, will wander between her husband and her family, cast out by both, until she die dismally in the street or in some abandoned hut. So usual a happening is this that it is repeatedly mentioned in their proverbs. Whenever a native sees on any occasion some duty failing to be done because it falls between two equally neglectful parties, he is apt to quote that brief, incisive proverb: *"Eembe eki nd'esanga"*—"The corpse which was in the narrow strip of forest between two parts of the village." For, as none had dared to care for this victim of a vicious system while yet she lived, for fear that he or she might be required to repay the marriage money, so for the same reason no one dares even to

bury her body. In more than one village the Gospel came first into favor because the little band of Christians would take up the putrid corpse of such a woman and bury her in a little Christian cemetery.

Some of the newer missionaries were a little startled when one night an evangelist from the interior, who was reporting on his work, said: "Brethren, we have great joy in our village. We have now six graves!" His native listeners required no explanation. They knew that the Christians in that village had picked up a half dozen unfortunates, dead or dying, and that there had come to them in recompense the joy of having done a real service.

But the cruelty of my Forest Children—how real it is! One day a missionary friend was on a journey. He came to a place where the jungle seemed to be the thickest. There he found a boy of perhaps ten or twelve years, who had been cast out by his parents because there had come upon him one of the malignant diseases so common in Central Africa, causing him to become covered with sores from head to foot. The missionary took him home, cared for him tenderly, and the white doctor treated him through many days. At last the flesh came back upon him, and he was playing about one day when the missionary observed that this boy had come into possession of a chicken. Then a day or so later he saw that some one had cut off one leg of the chicken right close up to the body. The missionary was shocked and spoke to the boy about it. The boy was not at all agitated. He said: "That is all right, White Man. I did that myself."

"What did you do it for?"

"I got hungry and cut it off and ate it."

The missionary, waxing a little wroth, said to the child: "Do you not know that that is cruel?"

"Look here, White Man," he replied, "I am not rich like you are. I cannot afford to eat a whole chicken at one time!"

Here he is in the forest, thrown out to die. Here he is with a chance for life, but in his blood the old passion, the old cruelty, which, if they are not changed, will make him, when he grows to manhood, as cruel as were his fathers. Born with him is that cruel passion for blood. In his manhood he will treat men and women as he treated the chicken in his childhood. His own Lonkundo language has in its unwritten literature a most significant proverb: "The unhatched owl has already owlish eyes." And here is one of the problems of the Gospel of the Gentle Savior—to change the hearts of men, to purify the fountains of their aspirations, to somehow inculcate the tenderness of Jesus in the souls where passion and cruelty rule.

"They must see Jesus! Then they will say:

> "Thou knowest all the past; how long and blindly
> Lost on the mountains dark, the wanderer strayed;
> How the Good Shepherd followed,
> He bore it home, upon His shoulders laid;
> And healed the wounds, and soothed the pain,
> And brought back life, and hope, and strength again."

And because so many of them have realized the infinite compassion of Jesus, this gentleness is beginning to come to them.

One of the most significant signs which we have seen of the coming of the Kingdom in this land is that when we have had the hungry, the afflicted, the suffering to care for, many of those who in the old days were

counted as cruel and bloodthirsty, have over and over again made sacrifices of splendid tenderness to help these brethren. One of my colleagues—a medical man—wrote me recently:

"There are from two to three hundred *bafayas* (strangers and visitors) here at Lotumbe for treatment all the time. They are sleeping on the porches or occupying the rooms of the Christian families of the community. Many of them are afflicted with the most filthy and loathsome diseases. They constitute a severe menace to the health of our people. Did you ever stop to think of the drain upon the local church these sick people make? An average of two hundred and fifty people a day calls for a lot of food and work, to say nothing of patience. There will be a lot of such jewels in the crowns of these people that we have overlooked, which will be seen when we see 'face to face,' won't there?"

Another sign of the coming of the Kingdom is that more than once these men who once were heartless, have put their own lives in jeopardy, being beaten with many stripes, stoned, and cast into the river to die, all for the sake of the Gospel which has made them over again. Whenever into a man's heart there comes that which makes him willing to suffer as once he made others suffer, we are sure that the coming of the Kingdom is not so far distant.

CHAPTER XIV

Babes in the Woods

WHEN I speak of Africa at public meetings, it is always a delight to see a large number of young people and children present. They are invariably my best listeners. So as I write instead of speaking, I wonder if my readers would not like to have me to tell a little about young life on the Equator?

You know I think there is nothing more cunning anywhere, except a white baby, than one of those little brown Bankundo babies! Especially is this true when the little one has not yet been painted with the red *ngola,* but has been rubbed with *nkolo* oil until he shines from top to toe. The taboo cord, or, in these later years, a string of bright beads, will be the only addition to nature's wardrobe. How attractive the children are, and how easy it is to love them! The little girls have such musical voices, it is a delight to hear them talk. Lonkundo flows so limpid from those tiny lips.

Bathing a baby is quite a simple matter. His mother takes him down to the river, seizes him by one arm, and dashes him into the cool water. If he does not like it, and cries, she holds his head under until he gives up crying. After she has washed him carefully, a drink of the same water in which he has been bathed completes the function. The eyelashes are pulled out

soon after birth, and the children, when they are older, are taught to keep them pulled out.

Infant mortality is very high. It has been estimated that forty per cent of the babies die before the age of two years. This is chiefly due to improper nourishment. Even very small children eat the heavy, sour, cassava bread. In fact, that part of Africa does not produce any foods suitable for tiny babies. Sugar is unknown, though sugar-cane is grown, and there is a taboo against the use of goats' milk. The feeding of so much heavy, starchy food during early years probably accounts for the average child looking as if he had swallowed a football!

The mother seldom leaves her baby. When very little, he is carried on her back in a broad strap or piece of bark. Carried thus, he goes with her to her plantation and cooking tasks, while she paddles her canoe, or even to the dance. As he gets a little older, he rides astride her hip, and very early learns to hang on tightly.

The cutting of the teeth is an important matter, for the order of their appearance is very significant. It was, and is, regarded as peculiarly unfortunate should the first upper teeth be cut before the lower ones.

All Bankundo women seem to love children, especially babies, and one of the pleasantest pictures which I carry in memory's gallery is of a group of those women gathered about a mother with her new baby. How they laugh and talk happily together as the little mite is passed from hand to hand. Whenever you praise one of these babies, be very sure never to say that the baby is heavy. For some reason that is very impolite.

The child is given several names, any one of which may be used, and different ones appear to be used at

different periods of life. But all these cognomens are "given names," for the "family name" does not exist. This makes the keeping of records exceedingly difficult, even after writing has been introduced. No one knows his or her birthday, or year of birth either. Some of the Christians have taken the date of their baptism for their birthday. Some names are quite common. "Bolumbu" is as ubiquitous as "Smith," and "Njöji" as "Brown." Names are sometimes given because of some special occurrence or event. A man near Bolenge paid fifty thousand brass rods for his first wife. Usually a man rejoices more over the birth of a girl than the birth of a boy, for the girl will bring a good marriage price, and that money will be used to add another wife to the father's or brother's harem, and thus strengthen the family ties in two directions. But a man frequently wants the first child born to be a son, and the man in question had set his heart on his first baby being of the ruling sex. And she was a girl! So in disappointment the father burdened his first-born with the name of *"Bakesibatanobangelobafitanaki"*—"The - fifty - thousand - brass - rods - which - were - thrown - away!"

Children generally run wild. Not much attention is paid to them or much care given them. In early years they are usually very attractive. One somehow never thinks it immodest for them to go about in their "birthday clothes" while they are very young. Their mothers use the same tactics with them that mothers in America do even yet, one fears. How often as I went along the street of the village have I heard a mother say to her naughty child: "If you don't act differently the white man will get you!" And in many a village the children have been shut up tightly in the houses when a

white man passed through for the first time, lest they look upon his face and die. I used often—and do even yet in more distant villages—to see the children scamper in fright when I came in sight, and I would see them peeping around the corners of the huts, their eyes big with wonder and fear. But in these later years, in the villages where I am known, they will shout: *"Nkökö aoya! Loyaka!"* "Grandfather is coming! Come on!" And soon they are gathered about me, as many as possible taking hold of my hands, and all talking at once, their eyes shining with gladness.

All too early they have to learn the discipline of pain, for the tribal marks must be cut on face and body. You will remember that I told you of these cuttings when, in a previous chapter, I took you on an imaginary visit to an interior village. Then at least two front teeth have to be chipped, so as to give the appearance of fierceness. Both of these mutilations are very painful. There are many hideous things in savage life, and seeing and hearing so much that is cruel tends to callousness, but I never can get used to these customs. So I am especially glad to be able to record that both these mutilation requirements are passing away, let us hope, forever.

Whatever education the children get is in the hands of the mother until early adolescence, though the father does teach the boys fishing, woodcraft, hunting, and things like that. When quite young, the boy makes himself a bow and arrows, but the arrows must be without iron points. Also he is taught to use long, slender spears, sharpened, but likewise without iron heads. A banana stalk makes an ideal target, for the spears stick in it when the aim is sure. Small birds are the chief marks for the arrows. These they are

taught also to catch with snares. The making and setting of traps for other animals and for fish is also a part of his training. If his father or other relative be a blacksmith, shield-maker, hewer, raffia-weaver, or witch-doctor, he is apt to follow in his footsteps. From earliest boyhood he is imbued with the idea of the superiority of his sex, and detests "girls' work." The boys become really expert in catching fish with hook and line, or even with a bent pin. But it seems likely that this mode of fishing is a foreign introduction. The mother teaches the girl the crude household tasks and commences to take her to the garden when she is quite small, fastening a small basket fashioned like her own upon the little back, thus initiating her into bearing burdens, for she will bear them the rest of her days. She helps her mother in the garden, and comes home with her basket also filled with food, and upon it her little bundle of firewood. She learns to make baskets, mats, *ngola* or pottery, according to her mother's special abilities. She early becomes a "drawer of water" also, and one sees her coming from spring or stream with bottle or kettle on her head. She soon becomes a good cook, and far too soon is given the care of her baby brother or sister, and carries the little one on her hip long before she is strong enough.

Children learn quite early that if they are to get much to eat, they must look out for themselves. So it is not at all an unusual sight to see a tiny child cooking his or her own miserable meal.

Boys and girls alike, if they live on the banks of a stream, learn to swim and paddle a canoe while quite young. And one could hardly imagine a happier time than they have swimming near a sand-bank on a hot afternoon. How they shout and scream and dive and

float! Quite literally they get so they can swim "like a fish."

They resemble the children of other lands in that they delight to tease their elders, and to get them embroiled. The proverbs of their language abound in maxims teaching them not to make bad blood between those older than they are. *"Banöju ntasomanyaka mpaka"*—"Children should never stir up trouble between their elders," is a good example. But they do it often, and many a village brawl, ending in broken heads or wounds, had no other beginning than in the careless fling of some small rascal.

How they love to tease! We had for a long time as an engineer on our steamer, a man named Bolumbe —an excellent workman. He had been a Christian for many years, and so always wore clothes. One day the steamer went on a sand-bank, and stuck so tightly that finally the skilled men of the crew went into the water to help the deck-hands push. Then it was discovered that Bolumbe had the most remarkable markings cut on his body. They are really a work of art. Some boys were on board, and as soon as they saw these cicatrices, they re-christened Bolumbe "Fafa Bompala"—"Father Lace-work!" He detested the nickname, but often, as he went along the streets, the boys would shout at him: "Fafa Bompala, why do you wear a shirt? Take it off and let us see your beauty!" Then they would run away, so like boys in all lands.

When one comes to know the Lonkundo language, he is frequently shocked at the language used by very young children. Prudery is far too little known, and the elders never seem to worry much about the subjects they discuss in the presence of their children. As a result, these children talk in quite unconcerned fashion

on topics not often mentioned in civilized society. I have never ceased to have a great pity for these primitive children as they laugh and play in the street and prattle together of vile village gossip. And the things of fetish and magic and taboo and all their allied horde —the knowledge of these comes all too early to the little minds. Very literally they dwell

> "In haunts of wretchedness and need,
> On shadowed thresholds dark with fears."

So from childhood they know the grip and the discipline of fear. What a wonderfully winsome thing to have a part in taking some of the terror out of the imaginations of those attractive children!

The girl grows up with no other idea than that an early marriage will be arranged for her. She need never worry about getting a husband, for primitive society knows no spinsters! But marriage, as we think of it, is unknown in the forest, save where the Christian ideal has been implanted.

Two other features of the training of children should not be omitted, though they deal with infinitesimals. The first has to do with their hair. Their way of doing it up for long periods and with *ngola* has a tendency to "population." This is taken for granted. Their proverbs mention it often and openly. If a man has been asked to perform what seems to him an impossible task, he will have this proverb ready: "Can a man with one finger kill all the lice in his head?" But "over-population" is considered bad form, so the children are taught to keep their heads as clear as possible of these invaders, and you will hear one little girl say scornfully of another: "She has *nsiji!*"

THE FATHER OF-THE-WITCH-DOCTORS, DORCAS AND MOSES.

Central Africa has been invaded with another pest. It is the "jigger," brought from Brazil. This should not be confused with the "chigger" of our southern states. It burrows unostentatiously into the foot, especially the toes, and then proceeds to lay its eggs in a little sac inside that burrow. No one can really know what itching is until he has had at least one jigger! If extracted at once, they do no harm. But if they are neglected, the harborer may eventually lose some of his toes, and everywhere he goes he scatters jigger-eggs, ready to hatch. So children who are well brought up are taught to keep their feet free from jiggers, and it is a reproach upon the whole family when people drive one of the children away from a house where he goes to play, saying: "You exceed in *bayanji.*"

They are also taught to eat properly. As has been noted in other connections, food is not at all plentiful, and the meat part of the diet is especially difficult to obtain. Even fishers and hunters have their scanty seasons. So greediness, especially in regard to meat, is looked down upon, and there are most opprobrious names for those who are given to that vice.

It might also be noted that one of the most cutting rebukes one may give a child—or a grown person—is just to ask: "Did not your mother teach you?" For the one bright spot in heartless heathendom is the affection which is so evident between the child and the mother. More than one man has said that if he lost his favorite wife he could get another, but that he never could get another mother. Of this affection their proverbs speak often and the wanderer always looks forward to being buried on the spot where his mother in pain gave him birth.

From childhood all are taught to give and respond

to the customary greetings with courtesy. In the morning one asks anyone whom he meets: *"Oetswo?"* "Are you awake?" and that person replies: "Yes! Are you awake?" And the first person then says: "Yes!" After noon, the question-greeting is, *"Ol'eko?"* "Are you there?" and at night it is, *"Olötswo?"* "Are you going into the house?" These and similar questions and answers constitute the salutations among equals and those of about the same age. But if a person should meet an older or superior acquaintance, or a chief, or a woman meet a man, the salutation would be, *"Losako!"* "Give me your motto." The one thus addressed will reply by giving some proverb or proverbial expression, which he has taken for his own. Not infrequently he uses the occasion for a sarcastic rap at the questioner, if there should not be good feeling between them. To one of still higher rank, or very old, the greeting is, *"Wanda-o!"* the meaning of which is much like "Losako!"

While the children are taught to be courteous, especially to elders, yet they are also instructed, at least by example, in the proper kind of language to use in case of a quarrel. Epithets without number adorn their language, and maledictions and curses have been developed to the *n*th degree. These are usually put in the form of bad wishes, such as: "May you fall upon a sharp stake!" "May a leopard get you!" or more often, "May you die!" When a person's mother is cursed in this way, only blood can atone for the insult. And to hope that the corpses of a person's ancestors may be unburied is not one of those pleasant social amenities which brings peace to a community!

Young people, and even children, sometimes develop a fiendish efficiency in the use of this kind of language,

and I have known older people to threaten suicide because of the stinging tongue of a child. How much Jesus' Gospel brings to these children of my children! For homes commence to take the place of houses, and in those Christian homes motherhood and childhood take their rightful places. Then schools bring awakening touches and some fresh breaths of the great world out beyond the forest. On the Lord's Day they go to the Sunday School, and before they can hardly realize it, Bible verses take the place of curses on the little lips. In both schools they learn to sing wonderful songs about Jesus, and the story of His life is added to their memory possessions.

How their brown faces glow when they go up to the white man's bungalow, and the white *mama* brings out the white baby for them to see. They learn that the baby girl is named *Basanga,* and the baby laughs as she sees their shining eyes and white teeth lost in happy smiles, and they all laugh together. They examine all her dainty little garments and ask all sorts of questions, and somehow, as they hurry home to tell all about it, there has been born in the little hearts the germ of an ideal, and they never can be quite the same again.

> "The smallest bark on life's tumultuous ocean
> Will leave a track behind forevermore;
> The lightest wave of influence set in motion
> Extends and widens to the eternal shore."

The pleasant-voiced white teacher shows them how to play wonderful games of which these Babes in the Woods have never even heard. And ofttimes one sees them "playing church" on Monday, one sturdy little fellow repeating much of the missionary's mes-

sage of the day before. One's heart is hushed within him when, after they have sung together a beautiful hymn, they bow all so gravely and pray the Lord's Prayer in concert.

How easy then to dream of better days for Bankundo children and to see a vision of a time when in every village of the forest land wholesome plays will be so much a token of new town life that instinctively there will come to mind the prophecy:

> "The streets of the city shall be full of the
> boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."

CHAPTER XV

A Congo Maiden

I REMEMBER one day sitting at my desk engaged in making a translation of the New Testament for the young churches of that land, when a shadow fell across the work which I was doing, and I looked up and saw standing in the doorway the most miserable specimen of humanity I had ever seen in that land of many miseries. It was a young girl, fourteen or fifteen years of age, so thin and emaciated that you might literally say of her that she was only skin and bones. Her only clothing was a few rags; her body was torn and scratched and bleeding in several places. Very timidly she asked me: "Are you the white man who protects little girls?" I told her I must be the one for whom she was looking. Then she told me her story.

I wish that you could hear it in her own language, in that musical Lonkundo which flows in such limpid fashion from the lips of the maidens. The girl told me that she had been born in Isaka, a village six or seven days' journey away; that her father was a very powerful chief, whom I knew. She had grown up in a good deal of freedom, because she was the daughter of the chief, and had not been sent away to a husband as early as most girls are, because of that fact. Then one day, she saw going through her village the chief of the town of Ntaka, not very far away, and as she

watched him passing through, attended by his retinue of wives and slaves and elders, her father turned to her and said: "You had better take a good look at that man, because some day he is going to be your husband."

The girl went to see her mother, who told her that before she had been born she had been sold as a wife to this chief. She learned that he was old enough to be her father, nearly old enough to be her grandfather, and already had fourteen wives. I do not think that up to this time the girl had ever heard the good news of Jesus, but some instinctive repulsion made her say in her heart that she would never be the wife of that man. But in the old heathen life that would never have made any difference. How many times one's heart has bled as he watched a young girl torn from her mother's arms to be taken by force to become the wife of some hideous polygamist!

It just so happened that soon after this the first Angels of the Annunciation came to her village. They were evangelists from Bolenge, who told the story of Jesus to the villagers. Bolumbu did not understand much of the Gospel, but she did get the heartening hope of the mission station as a City of Refuge. Some weeks afterward, she saw coming into her village this same chief with about ten of his wives. Each of these women had a basket on her back. When they arrived in front of her father's house, they emptied the contents of the baskets out in front of her father as he sat there in his chieftain's chair. She saw them spread out the brass rods and the anklets and the collars, and everything which goes to make up treasure in a land which has no money. As soon as she saw that, she knew what it meant. She knew that this was the final payment made for her and that when the chief went

away the next morning, he would take her with him; that that would constitute the marriage ceremony, and there would be no more hope for her. So that night after everybody had gone to bed, she ran away into the forest, into that mysterious forest filled with demons and ghosts, but better than such a marriage.

Now if she had dared to come along one of those foot-paths she might have reached Bolenge in six or seven days. But she knew that would not do, because only a little while after leaving the village, she had heard the war drum, the wireless telephone of the forest, sending out a message in code. It had made known to the people everywhere that Bolumbu, daughter of the chief of Isaka, had run away, and that whoever found her was to bring her back at once. So for two weeks she made her way through the trackless jungle. She never saw the face of a human being during that time. All she had to eat was what she could find in the forest, or wherever some garden happened to be remote from a village. Here she was, and as she finished, she said,—and I could not measure the entreaty that she put into the words: "White Man, surely you will not let them take me away again?"

I had no answer to give, because I knew that by every law, white and black, this girl, a minor, if her father came for her, would probably be required to go with him. I simply told her to go to the Girls' School and stay there with the other girls. You should have seen her about three days afterward, when she came dancing into my office to show me the first dress she had ever had in her life. It was made of coarse cloth, like blue denim, but I do not suppose a dress from Paris ever gave more pleasure than this child of the forest had in this simple, rough dress of hers. She commenced go-

ing to school and to church, and we began to love her, and then the inevitable happened.

Two chiefs came stalking up on our veranda one morning with great dignity—a sure sign of anger—and after we had exchanged greetings, the one whom I recognized as Bolumbu's father (it was easy to guess the other to be the prospective husband) said: "I have come to get my daughter." I told him that we would call the girl and talk the matter over. So Bolumbu came timidly up—a girl must always be very modest and humble in the presence of her father or other male relative. "Bolumbu," I said, "your father has come to take you back to your village. You have been here some time with us, and perhaps you ought to go with him." Then she burst out: "White Man, do you think that because you have lived a few years in our land you know anything at all about our people? Do you not know that because I ran away from home and came here they will think I have betrayed to you all the secrets of our tribe and all the passwords of our secret societies? That I have told you of all the terrible murders that have been committed, all the slaves that have been sold, or buried alive, contrary to law, back there in our village? They would never let me get to the first village alive!"

Well, law is law, and ought generally to be obeyed, but Bolumbu did not go. I have heard that there are some people who can swear in English and do it very smoothly and cleverly, but if you want to hear real swearing, you ought to hear it done in the Lonkundo language—it is made for it. As the chiefs went away, they commenced uttering maledictions, saying: "White Man, you had better watch out. The first time you go into the forest you will fall into an elephant trap and

be killed! Or, if because of some powerful charm you escape that, remember that we have some fierce leopards waiting for you! Besides, we have sent word to a lot of crocodiles to await you at the beach, and one will surely get you!" They cursed my younger brother and my older brother; my father and my sister and my grandfather; my uncles and aunts and every relative conceivable or inconceivable; and ended by wishing that all the bones of all my ancestors should be unburied in the sacred burying grounds.

But Bolumbu stayed. She came day after day to the school, and every time a service was held in the church, she would be right up in one of the front rows. I can almost see her now, her wistful young face upturned as I tried to tell her and her people something of the wonder and the glory of the Son of God, and of that which he had wrought upon the Cross.

Then, one day, she came again to my office, and I looked up with a smile, because she had come to seem just like one of the household. "What can I do for you this time, Bolumbu?" The Lonkundo language has not very much poetry about it; it is very simple and direct, and often has a most awfully blunt way of saying things. Without any introduction, she said: "White Man, I am going to die." "Why, Bolumbu," I said, "what do you mean? Have any of these people, your father or your husband, threatened you? We will protect you, if need be, with our lives." "No, teacher. I have ceased to worry about those things. But I have the sleeping-sickness."

Of all the sad and mysterious diseases which have ever cursed this land of so many sadnesses and mysteries, this is the saddest and the most mysterious of them all. One of the characteristics which makes this

such a terribly sad malady is that it is preëminently a mental disease, so the reason is usually affected in the early stages. Another is that it almost always influences the moral nature, and the whole character of the person may be changed, and never for the better. After long months of wasting waiting, death often seems merciful, even if it come in coma or delirium.

I said: "Bolumbu, you surely must be mistaken. Have you been to see the white doctor?" "No, we people of the Bankundo do not need to go to a doctor when we have this sickness. We know it ourselves. But that was not the thing I came to talk to you about. I wanted to know, White Man, if you thought I was good enough to be baptized." Friends, if you have been searching for souls in the multitude through the years, you will know something of the joy which surged within my heart, because that was just the one thing that was lacking. Bolumbu had always listened to the Gospel, but it never seemed to have any personal meaning to her. I hastened to tell her that it was not a question of goodness, but whether she was willing to give her heart to the wonderful Christ who made deliverance possible to her. She said: "You know very frequently we get crazy and curse awful curses. I wonder if you could arrange for me to be baptized very soon?"

The next Sunday morning, she came down to the riverside, and many of the people had gathered there. I remember how frail her little body was as I lowered her gently into the water—we had not realized the ravages the disease had already made on her. As I lifted her from the water, I looked down into her face and saw it glow with the light which betokened that in her obedience she was "seeing Him who is invisible." Then

her girl friends wrapped her up gently and took her back to their house.

All that we had feared and dreaded for her came to pass. Some few weeks after that we took her out and laid her away in the little God's Acre; there where the palm arches join together like some great cathedral of nature. The light came shining down through them upon the new-made grave, and we went sadly back home. The beauteous lines of Oliver Wendell Holmes are very literally true of her:

> "But not beneath a graven stone,
> To plead for tears with alien eyes;
> A slender cross of wood alone
> Shall say that here a maiden lies
> In peace beneath the peaceful skies."

Yet, friends, if any discouragement ever comes to us, if some days we wonder whether Africa is ever to be won, all we have to do is to remember the light in Bolumbu's face that day, to make us gird up our loins again and go on until the victory be won.

CHAPTER XVI

Two Silver-Haired Friends

ONCE again the multitude gathered in the low church, and once more the smoky lamps strove courageously to illumine the thatch-covered darkness. Outside only a few scattered stars cast their tiny beams upon the surface of the broad Congo River. From the *lokole* house came the booming tones of the call-drum, saying in insistent tones: *"Yak'a nsambela! Yak'a nsambela!"* "Come to church! Come to church!" And from every direction came the groups, their ebony faces lit up by high-held torches. From many a throat rose up exultant songs, each group having its own favorite. For it was Christmas night, always set aside in that church for the annual roll-call and the offering of gifts to the King.

Soon in their rhythmic language was lifted in one Hosanna of joy the Doxology. Prayers followed and other hymns. Then the White Teacher arose, and in that self-same flowing language, told the sweet story of the Babe of Bethlehem. Never does that story lose its freshness, and here were sitting those who had heard it so few times. The melting, melodious phrases of the narrator illumined anew their hearts, for it was unto *them* was born the Savior, that night when the angels sang.

The story told, the roll-call commenced. As each

Christian's name was pronounced, its possessor came up the aisle between the rude benches, and laid down a gift of love. What a weird scene it was! Dimmer even had burned the oil-lamps; faces were invisible and the givers walked like ghosts in the shed-like structure; a lamb, carried as a gift, bleated suddenly in the silence, and the missionary bride clutched nervously her husband's arm—and he laughed noiselessly as he called another name! And yet . . . each gift spelled devotion and sacrifice, and something of radiance overshone the dimness; for these were gifts to send out the Light. In some real sense their hearts were saying:

> "As the wise men came that Christmas Day
> To offer their gifts, so we would lay
> Our gifts at the Christ child's feet today."

"Ekota Bana Bato," called the reader, and a queer old figure, whose hair showed white as a lamp sputtered forth a bolder light for an instant, went on tottering limbs to place her gift with the others. When she had placed on the table her tiny packet, wrapped in a clean, green leaf, she started back to her seat. But her feebleness was too evident, and she would have fallen had not strong young arms picked her up. At the white man's direction, they laid her on her own *boanga* in her neatly swept hut. "Now," said he, using in affectionate politeness the name every old woman among the Bankundo loves, "Grandmother, tell me where you feel pain. The white doctor comes quickly."

In faltering phrases she told the story of her gift. Three days before had come to her the poignant realization that Christmas Day was at hand, and with it no joy for her, because she had no offering. All the redeemed would be in hilarious mood that night, but

no gifts of hers would speed glad feet along the jungle paths to those who knew not as yet her wondrous Lord. Then her eyes fell on the one thing she possessed—a bundle slender as her three bony fingers held together, but a magic package, for it contained golden-brown dried fish from the Ubangi—and her only food. Quickly she hobbled out into the dusty street, and sold her precious fish, and when her name was called she went gladly, if feebly, to make her gift. For three days no food had passed her lips. Small wonder she was fainting, and her step faltering!

> "Verily I say unto you, this poor widow cast in more than all they that are casting into the treasury. For they all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all she had, even all her living."

Whenever I think of that land, and of my people, I am glad that there is an increasing number of villages where we have little churches who have the Christmas joy, and an enlarging number of people into whose lives the light has come. But I cannot get away from the fact that the Bombili people and the Nkole and the Yoye and the Lalia and the Ngelewa and the Topoke and the Samanda, and those other tribes beyond the Bankundo, are still shut up in those little isolated villages of theirs, and have never heard even the first footfalls of the first messenger of Jesus. I wonder, friends, if we really believe in our hearts that Jesus meant that the Gospel should go to the last man and the last woman in each one of those hidden villages of the forest—this Gospel which has meant so much to you and to me?

I always think the old men and the old women in

primitive life are particularly pathetic. That pathos abides even when, like Ekota Bana Bato, she knows the companionship of the Mystic Comrade. But it finds a special accentuation with those who have not found Him. I am thinking particularly of another of my elder friends—an old man whom I knew through a number of years in whose village it was often my privilege to preach the Gospel. He always gathered his people together and asked me to tell them the Jesus story. I want to tell you of the last time I ever saw him. It was on Sunday afternoon. He was seated at the foot of the ancient palaver tree of his village—these are trees which are picked out because of their wide-spreading branches, and the people often assemble in their shade. They are nature's town halls, where all the gatherings of the village are held. This tree had been struck by lightning, and now it was only an old blackened trunk, with gnarled limbs, and a few twisted branches. Seated at the foot of it was this old man, so old that he could scarcely see any more, the whiteness of his hair apparent beneath the *ngola,* and his limbs almost as twisted and gnarled as the tree beneath which he sat—made so by one of the mysterious diseases of that land of mystery and disease. His hands and feet and part of his face were turned white with another and even more mysterious disease. If I should tell you the name of that old man, you would not find it very beautiful, either in his language or in ours. It was "Ibwa y'alongo" which, in our language, means "Death-in-blood." The way he came to have his name was that when he was a young man he was chosen to lead the warriors in battle. He had fashioned a war-club from the gigantic tusk of a huge elephant, and woe to those who met him in jungle war. In those days,

when he felt the pride of his youth and there came into his life the lust for battle and for killing, he had taken an oath, an oath terrible even in that land of many oaths. He had sworn by the bodies of his ancestors and by the memory of his mother, that never should he die of any sickness, but should instead be killed in the battle front, fighting against the enemies of his race and of his tribe. When the people heard this, and especially after he became their chief, they gave him the name, "Ibwa y'alongo", "Death-in-blood." But now they had well-nigh forgotten all about those days in which once he fought so valiantly. His strength was gone from his arms, and no longer did men fear him. He had not forgotten, though, and often in our conversations he would hark back to those years. For

"Youth longs and manhood strives, but age remembers;
Sits by the raked-up ashes of the past,
Spreads its thin hands above the whitening embers
That warm its creeping life-blood till the last."

As I spoke to him and his people that day, and tried to make them understand, as I had so many times before, something of what the love of God means to men, because that one thing is hardest for them to believe—that God really loves His people—the old man interrupted me, saying: "Now, White Man, you are always telling us how God loves us, but if He loves us, why does He permit me to live? All the warriors that I led in battle are gone; of all that harem of wives which I had and which gave me such a reputation among the people, there is left but that one old woman yonder, and she is as old and as tired as I am. Why is it that your God does not let me die?"

I tried to show him what life really means, and what

the love of God means, and that in His forbearance He gives men time for repentance. Then I commenced to tell him about that place up yonder which God has prepared for all the old and tired people of earth. But he would not let me continue, and kept interrupting. "White Man, even if that is so, how am I ever going to get there? I cannot see much any more, and I am old and weary, and heaven is so far away, and I don't know the way. How will I ever get there?"

Well, I tried to tell him of the Way, the Truth, and the Life. But he never found it, because he was too old. He was fettered with all the traditions of his ancestors, traditions which were perhaps old already when Christ came into the world. No, he never found the way, and one day the witch-doctors carried him out into the forest, and chanted over his grave those weird dirges, chanted long before over the bodies of his ancestors. But friends, Central Africa is filled with young men and young women and boys and girls who can and will know the way, if you give to them the story of Jesus.

CHAPTER XVII

The Real Tragedy

THAT Land of he Forest is a land of tragedy. Not long may one live beside the Grand River and fail to hear the sobs and moans. For treacherous as its placid surface is the silence of the jungle, and beneath apathetic exteriors the fires of heart infernos burn, while to the comprehending soul the most piercing cries are those which are never uttered.

I stood one morning beside a dying man. Within the clean wall of his adobe cottage were gathered a group of friends and relatives. Some few were pagans, but the hysteria of heathenism was strangely absent. The lips of some of the Christians moved inaudibly in prayer. Memory turned back the clock of the years—a good fifteen years. I saw this man, now so soon to pierce the curtain of mystery, as he was then. A young warrior, a polygamist commencing to gather a harem, his voice just beginning to be heard in the village council. He heard the Gospel, and it found him. Wives, charms, rank, riches—all that is dear to the heart of heathenism—he cast into the discard of a great renunciation. Up out of great tribulation he came to crave that his robes be washed white in the Blood of the Lamb. Toilsomely he wrought over the strange symbols of the white man's book, and learned to read. It became to him a joy to carry the story of Jesus to dis-

tant hamlets hidden in the forest. With a wife who had also the Jesus ideals, he built a Christian home, and children came to dwell with them. Of the five only two abode long—sickness, swift and deadly, swept the others away. And once again his pagan family laughed. Again away to the villages which had not yet heard—his heart sorrowing most of all for the jeers amid which he must leave his wife and children. Then he was smitten by one of the weird, lingering diseases of his land. The white doctor came often, but this day the sufferer had read his doom in his teacher's face, and had made known his last wishes to the group which was gathered there.

As I came, pastor and friend, he said no word, but his wistful face turned to mine in one last appeal—and in vain. Oh, the utter helplessness of such a moment! And those yearning eyes—how they haunt!

Was that the tragedy of Africa? Yes, and No.

A white mother had watched over her baby girl the whole long night. As she had fought for her darling's life in the darkness, so she fought again, and with even more insistence, from dawn until the twilight-less night came. The child's father followed afar the Gleam which had lured them to Africa's forest and jungle. All unconscious of illness at home or of futile messengers of recall who followed his path, his stalwart limbs carried him deeper and deeper into the interior, and his voice pealed out like bugle-notes in those sleepy recesses of the woods. The silvery Congo moonlight fell all so gently upon the bungalow of the missionary, but within its walls the unequal strugggle went on. Before midnight the last tiny heart-beat was hushed, and the young mother was alone with her dead.

With the dawning of the morning came the realiza-

tion that no other white person was near enough to help. Alone she prepared and dressed the little form for the burial, and placed it in the rude coffin, hewn by the hands of natives who had loved this little blossom of the White Race. No other voice was there to say the last words at the grave, so that duty was fulfilled also, nor did her voice falter as she read of Him who is "the Resurrection and the Life." Then, bent and gray as an old woman of the race she had come to help, she went slowly back to wait alone, in the silence of the desolated bungalow, for the coming of husband and father.

That is the hurt of Africa. God forbid that one should minimize such tragedies. Yet it is not the real tragedy of which I am speaking to you. Let Edgar A. Guest tell us why:

"But hope God gave to woman and man
Who see their loved ones die,
And ever since first this world began
Though we wonder and question why,
Hope whispers low: you shall love again,
And joy shall follow your hours of pain.

"Death is death to the beasts of earth,
But man has a soul divine,
And the passing on is a royal birth to
an everlasting line.
And hope shines out through the darkest
day—
They still live on who have gone away."

Go with me once more through that forest. Journey with me along its narrow trails. Some day in its dank depths we will come upon an *elaji*. Mangoes and palms and orange-trees mingle in most incongruous fashion

with the jungle growth. And a lone *papaya* yields up its luscious fruit for our breakfast table. You need not to be told that this *elaji* was once a village. Now deserted, the tall rank grass and the matted undergrowth have claimed for the forest its own again. What a terribly suggestive picture it is—never again will it be virgin forest—never again will it be a village—never will it be anything but an *elaji*. As we pass on it is with the feeling that the only elegiac which might be written over it is "Ichabod."

Some seventeen years ago a man became a member of the church at Bolenge. He learned to read and write. Equipped with a memory unusual even among a people of remarkable memories, he soon knew by heart large portions of the New Testament in Lonkundo. His self-abnegation was evident, and he made large sacrifices for his faith. He was the pioneer of the Gospel in the Ubangi. A wild crew of heathen beat him with clubs as they tried in vain to drive him from their village. An almost miraculous intervention alone saved him from death at the hands of the cannibal Nköle. He became an eloquent preacher, an officer of distinction in the church. He was loved and trusted alike by white and black. When he gave up evangelistic work and came to reside again at Bolenge, the missionary noted with content that Bombanza was regular in his attendance at all the services, and a listener to gladden the heart. He married a queenly woman, and he and Toke had a worthwhile home.

And so the years glided along. Closely related to a long line of chiefs, the influence of this godly man was far-reaching, and his word carried weight in the community and tribal life. Then the missionary commenced to note that Bombanza's seat was often empty.

Inquiry among the elders of the church evidenced that they were much concerned. With a pastor-heart, the missionary tried to woo him back to his allegiance. He made some sincere attempts, but they lacked enthusiasm. The old life was winning. Soon it was plain that, like Samson, "he wist not that the Lord had departed from him." An uncle died, and left a large harem of wives. Then one day Bombanza came back to the village, drunk, and with ten wives. That day the missionary died a little, as when one loses a friend.

For here is the real tragedy of Africa—the flame going out at the altar of the heart; the death of a soul. Paul knew all about it. Demas loved this present world; Alexander, the coppersmith, did him most harm in that his hardened heart failed to hear the wooing voice of his teacher; all forsook him as he awaited death in that cold Roman prison; and he himself strove mightily with his body, lest, after he had preached the Gospel to others, he might know the tragic end of the castaway. Every shepherd of souls in every land knows this tragedy.

I have been trying to tell you a little of the Congo church of Jesus Christ which is coming to be, but a church like this did not come into being without a good deal of opposition. Because the devil does not give up those who follow him without a struggle, and those who were continuing the old life tried all the time to draw the people back again. Heathenism is always reaching up its slimy hands from the mire, trying to draw young Christians back down again into its vile depths. Those hands are as many as those of an octopus. We who live here in this Christian civilization, with everything thrown about us to help us, do not know anything about temptation. We do not really

know what temptation is. It is the common, everyday thing with African Christians. We do well to remind ourselves of how much the atmosphere in which we were nurtured, and which is ever about us, has to do with our characters. How little we comprehend that we have always known of Jesus.

> "Through Him the first fond prayers are said
> Our lips of childhood frame;
> The last low whispers of our dead
> Are burdened with His name."

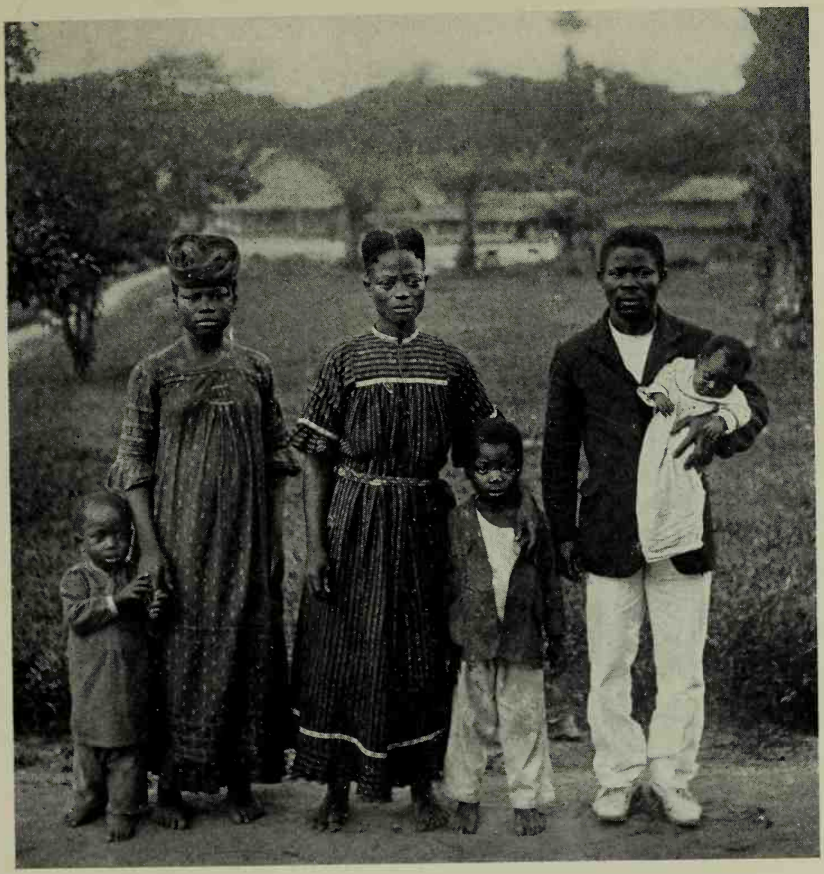
Far different it is with these beginners in the new life. So, whenever you pray for Africa's redemption, I hope that you will pray for the missionaries, but that far more often you will pray for the native Christians, who one by one are coming out of that black mass into the light. Pray that they may be able to withstand those tempations of which we can hardly conceive, and which mean that they must have every help that may possibly be given them, and that they must live very close to the Master, if they are going to be able to win the victory.

Soon after the first church was organized there on the Equator, four of the wives of a certain polygamist began to come to the services. Their husband at once forbade their coming. His name was Bongota, and he was the mighty hunter of the region. Some of the Christians went to remonstrate with Bongota, and some of the bolder ones threatened him with the judgment of God. Drawing back his long, broad-bladed spear, the hunter boasted: "Where is this *Nzakomba* of yours? I will meet him as I meet the buffalo on the plains and the elephant in the forest, and slay him with this spear. Let me look on your God." With that he put all four

of the wives in the stocks and went away to hunt. That night they brought home his body, trampled to a mass by a wounded buffalo. As the chief loosed the women from the stocks, he said: "It is God who wrought this." And terror spread through all the countryside. But that was an unusual deliverance. In dozens of villages women in the stocks fought in vain with hunger and thirst and beatings and the strained pain of the stocks themselves, and went back to sullen and hopeless obedience. Timid souls found no place in the Kingdom, and more than one brave life went out rather than yield.

The temptations of the old life—who shall name them? The obsession of sex from early adolescence on to senility; the crushing impact of custom vocal in public opinion; the desire for rank and consequent over-ruling; the perpetual migrations and ensuing retrogression; the stunting environment reeking with all that is non-Christian—these and a long list not to be named.

Among the out-standing perils of Christians in Congoland should be noted their family ties. For these are not only strong, but they represent special temptations. The family is the basic social unit in a different sense than it is here in our modern life, and in its solidarity are many pit-falls. Usually when a man becomes a Christian, his family disowns him, and thus to the sense of treading new paths falteringly, there is added a certain homesick sense of being cut off entirely from his relatives. To this day a Christian man, however repugnant such a bargain may be, can obtain his one wife only by purchase. Also, Bankundo law ordains that, should a male member of any family die, his wife and children are to be inherited by the family.



CHRISTIAN FAMILY, BOLENGE.

So every Christian man has likewise to face the possibility of his building a Christian home being futile, for at his death wife and children may be thrust, by inexorable family law, back into polygamy and paganism.

Closely akin to this peril is that of his world of thought. It is not in a day nor yet in puny years that superstition is to be entirely eradicated from the black man's mind, however Christian he may be. He goes bravely on, trying to assimilate the emancipating principles of Jesus, and then one day his wife falls sick. Far distant is the white doctor from his village, and he will not seek a witch-doctor. His only recourse is the old women—in every land the conservators of superstition. They bring their medicinal herbs, but really depend on charms, and smite their thighs in undisguised horror at his public attitude toward the spirits.

Or his father is ill in their native village, and word comes that the old man mumbled in his delirium that his disease has come upon him because his son has become a Christian. Then all at once this man, who thought he had broken once for all with that old world of thought in which witches and charms and spirits and ghosts walked, wakes up to find that all the while he has been bound to it subtly and unconsciously by fine threads of thought strong as steel bands. And all the old fight has to be fought over again.

Yes, there have been desertions, and some have fallen away. But, at whatever cost, we are determined to build up a New Testament church with New Testament ideals. This means that, in an even larger sense than ever before, we must teach as well as preach, we must shepherd as well as evangelize. The crying need of the moment is for more well-trained pastor-evangelists,

who know the gentle art of shepherding and feeding the lambs of God. All their aid must come from above, for none will come from their surroundings. But it can come through him, as he points out the spiritual resources within their reach, and builds them into the helpful solidarity of the family of God. His it will be to teach them all the outreach of service, and its resultant strength.

In addition to the old perils, we must now take into consideration the war, and its effect on West Central Africa. In the first place, the exigencies of the war situation put rifles into many hands not accustomed to modern firearms. The Belgian native army was very small at the outbreak of the war, but the military situation, especially in the Tanganyika region, soon demanded that the army be very largely increased. Modern rifles were placed in the hands of some thousands of partially trained natives. Among them were quite a number of Christian young men. These soldiers, new and old, fought well, and King Albert, as well as the commanding officers, has honored them as sharers in the glory of those campaigns. Generally speaking, they came back with a very sober realization of what war means. Despite the terrible losses which a long war entails, it was perhaps better that these primitive soldiers should have been engaged in a long war rather than in a short one. A short war might have shown them only the apparent glory of it all, but a long one brought them back, as I have said, in a very sobered frame of mind.

In addition to the soldiers who were mobilized and conscripted, there were needed for transport purposes a large number of natives, who were called military porters. Supplies and all sorts of ammunition were

carried upon the heads of these military porters, as a large part of the country where the military operations were carried on was of such a nature that wheeled vehicles could not be employed.

Now for the effects upon Central African life of the mobilization of so large a number of natives in war-like pursuits. Here one deals with a very complex situation. I have already indicated the effect upon the soldiers, speaking by and large. Among them, however, there were a few whom Paul probably would have called "baser spirits" who came back and gloried in the fact that they had killed white people. These baser spirits were without doubt in a very small minority in the Belgian native army, and yet one could not, in such a study as this, leave out their influence. The soldiers were very well treated; well fed, well cared for; and while their losses were heavy in certain engagements, they had had enough of war to know that these were losses which were inevitable.

It may take years for us to get an adequate idea of what the war has brought to pass in Africa. But even now we may say that while it has had some very vicious effects upon the natives, it has not in any sense stopped the onward march of the Christian hosts. Very evidently the war is going to make necessary certain readjustments, not only for governments, but for missionary societies as well. When one remembers the thousands of young men who had guns in their hands for the first time, and that these men saw so many modern inventions which they had never before been able to see, and that certain contacts with civilization were made possible for them because of the war, he cannot but realize that many things are to be different in the future.

This has already affected the native Christians, and we are very glad to recognize that there seems to be much more of a disposition to take leadership in the life of their own churches. Toward this we have looked and dreamed, and if even out of a great disaster such as this more of real leadership is to be evolved, we cannot but be thankful. God give us real understanding hearts in such days as these!

But we dare not blind our eyes to the fact that since the war there has been a certain recrudescence of heathenism. This appeared first during the influenza pandemic in 1918-19, when many bloody sacrifices were offered upon the graves of those who were victims of that scourge. It has had its chief manifestation in the birth and activity of a new secret society, the *Inongo*. This movement does not seem to aim directly against Christianity, but rather to be against civilization. Its ideal seems to be the going back to the life which they lived before white people came to their land. So its members go armed from village to village, and compel the people to give up wearing clothes and to rub their bodies with the old carmine paint. This secret society is particularly strong in the High Juapa region, and so the Christians there are passing through a time of testing. A delegation of the *Inongo* came into the region where we had teachers living in the village of Bosodongo. As the work was new, there were as yet no Christians, so the *Inongo* found only the evangelist and his wife. The chief of the village was friendly and protected them as long as he could. Finally part of his own people joined the reactionaries. So he came to the preacher's house, saying: "I cannot protect you any more. The thing for you to do is to take off your clothing and rub yourselves with *ngola*. You may be-

lieve what you like in your hearts." But these two followers of Jesus were well-instructed Christians, so they replied: "No, that will not do. Clothes are nothing, it is true. God sees the heart. Yet they are signs that we are the people of Jesus. If we are killed we will die clothed, and everybody will realize that we belong to Christ."

The *Inongo* band came, hideously painted in red, black, and white. The mysterious roll of medicine was buried in the center of the village. The grotesque dance of death began. Frenzy came upon the dancers. They dipped their arrow points in poison and started for the evangelist's hut. He refused to do their bidding. The arrows fell thickly about them, one sticking in his wife's dress, but they still refused. Only the coming of a terrible storm, followed by the arrival of a white man, saved their lives.

After all, the war only accentuated a situation which even before then had been increasingly evident. We must take account of the fact that the old picturesque Central Africa is rapidly passing away. Time was when its rivers were shrouded in weird mystery. Now they are charted and the whistle of a steamer is in many districts heard far more frequently than the war-drum. Time was when the Congo was the "wheel-less" land, and a wheel-barrow its first introduction to that mighty agent of civilization. Now the wheels have commenced to turn; automobiles whizz along a few roads; railroads are being seriously projected; and hydroplanes carry mail to a few favored places. Now the trader carries the glamour of a pseudo-civilization into the remote hamlets of the jungle. Time was when people wondered if "The Congo" might not be a part of China. Now the discovery of gold, coal, copper,

and radium, have put it on the map once for all, and as these lines are being written the papers carry the news that the price of radium has been cut in half because of Congo production.

With this passing of the old life, we have come into a transition time. It lacks the magic and the mystery of yesterday; it is so crude and awkward that it requires faith to believe that it presages a wonderful tomorrow. Full of new perils for the soul, it must be faced with confidence. Into Africa's life Jesus has entered and He is sufficient for this new day as He has been for the old. In such a time each pastor, native, or missionary, needs often to pray,

> "Help me the slow of heart to move
> By some clear winning word of love;
> Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
> And guide them in the homeward way."

The Gospel found my people the Children of the Forest; it is calling them to be Children of God. Once born into the Kingdom, our task for them is but fairly begun. Each prayer they utter must be taught them, as long ago we learned to lisp our first prayers in a Christian home. Along paths which are at once rough and treacherous we must guide their stumbling, slipping feet. Ours will be the doubtful joy of helping them up after each fall. Pastors and teachers and leaders we must create for them. In heart-break we will see some fail their Redeemer and Africa's tragedy repeated in the sun and in the shade, all the while saying with Whittier:

> "I have not seen, I may not see
> My hopes for man take form in fact,

But God will give the victory
In due time; in that faith I act,
And he who sees the future sure
The baffling present may endure,
And bless, meanwhile, the unseen
Hand that leads
The heart's desire beyond the halting
step of deeds."

One night they came running to say: Nkökö,* Nyang'ea Yomoto is dying, and wishes to speak to you." Soon we stood by her beside, and spoke of the Life that is Life indeed. "White Man, if Jesus calls me, let His will be done. I did not ask to speak to you of death." Turning back the blanket she showed us her little baby girl, sleeping by her side. "Look, Teacher! When I am dead, my family will try to sell her into a heathen marriage, where she will never hear of our Savior. It must not be." Gathering her little strength for a final effort, she picked up her baby and put her in my arms. "Take her, White Man of Jesus. Don't let them sell her. Keep her for Jesus."

*The native name of the writer, meaning "Grandfather."

CHAPTER XVIII

The Lure of Africa

WHO shall describe the fascination of Africa? Or who can reveal the secrets of its lure? From boyhood days, reading of Stanley and Livingstone, and through all the years beneath its sun, that land has never lost its glamour for me. The mere mention of its name makes my heart beat a little faster. I close my eyes and it all comes back—I can see the sun dancing on the coffee-colored Congo, the ebony paddlers bending in unfailing unison to their task, and can hear their antiphonal chants; I can see the sun come shimmering down through the intertwined branches of the forest trees, lighting with its warm glow the sodden faces of a caravan; in my nostrils mingle the dank stench of the swamps, the perfume of the orange blossoms, the faint, sickly odor of the *papaya,* and the fetid odor of unwashed humanity; or it is night, and the stillness is invaded by the nerve-racking beating of the *ngomo* drum, the hand-claps like pistol-shots, and the weird singing of the dancers; our canoe floats down a river and a village rises out of the night, each tree and hut outlined in ghostly distinctness by the cold light of the tropical moonlight. . . . .

Its weirdness and its magic and its charm all throw once more their spell over me. But is its lure to be found there? The romance of it all—is that the key to the chains which bind the heart with unbreakable

bonds? Yes, if one have the understanding heart and be able to comprehend in what that romance consists. Will you let me try to show you?

In the early days of our Mission, a boy named Ekebe became a servant to a medical missionary and his wife. Into that home a baby girl came, and part of Ekebe's duties was to care for her—Okuki, the natives called her. To that little girl he gave his unstinted devotion, and from that day to this, his loyalty to the missionaries has been almost unparalleled. He was a bright lad, and soon was appointed as school-teacher. Then in 1907, when the writer set up the first printing-press at that station, Ekebe started to learn that trade. Fidelity earned promotion, and he has been the foreman of that little printing-plant since 1910.

But during all the years there had always been the one thing lacking in Ekebe—he was not a Christian. He knew the Jesus story almost by heart, and the Words of God were no stranger to him. Once even, on an itinerating trip, when we had left him alone in one village while we went to preach in another, the people insisted that he teach them the *Baoi b'ebikyelo*—the Things of Life, and he had to do so. But something always kept him from the great decision. Finally, however, the memory of those dear friends in whose home he had worked twenty years before, and whose prayers arose ever in his behalf, added to the continual impact of the Gospel in word and book and life, was not in vain, although it was not until April of 1920 that he became a Christian.

On the first day of the next year, as we were leaving on furlough, he handed me a letter, asking me not to read it until after the steamer had started. In that note there was one precious passage:

"Behold the way in which you have now arrived at fifteen years of stay here with us, and today you are coming to go to *Mpoto*. Reflect in your heart that everybody is with sorrow at your going, and have no strength at all in their bodies. Grandfather, you have placed me in a position of great responsibility in my work, but there is another thing that is greater—this time you are leaving me in salvation in the Church. Thank you! For I see that the greatest gift you have given me is to leave me in the salvation of Jesus, and I have exceeding joy."

There is one glimpse of the lure of Africa. Not simply that one finds grateful hearts, though they are very worth-while, for gratitude is a fruit of the new life. But more than that and deeper; to find that those whom we have introduced to Jesus Christ appreciate the Father's best gift as the finest and most joyous experience of life.

One evening the orphan girls were heard shouting and making more noise than usual as they went to draw water from the spring at the beach. Someone went to see what the matter was. Above the clamor one name was heard repeated, "Ekota Nganga! Ekota Nganga has come!" All hurried to the brow of the hill on which the station is built, and watched a small canoe, with its lone paddler seated in the bottom, slowly coming to the landing place. An old woman with wizened face wreathed in smiles picked up her basket, put stool and mat in it, and came, paddle in hand, to grasp the outstretched hands of black and white friends.

Ekota Nganga lives on the other side of the Congo River, at Mpombo. For fifteeen years she had worked almost alone to establish the Cause in her little village. After the years of faithful effort, she had not yet seen her dreams come true. A handful of rather weak followers of Jesus, instead of the strong church she

craved, was as yet the only fruitage of the seed she had sown so unsparingly. But in her dear old heart the lamp of Life burned always bright, and she never grew discouraged. Once in three months she paddled for ten hours to join in the great reunion service at Bolenge, always bringing some generous offering for the treasury of the Lord.

The next morning she came to my office, bringing one basket, rather badly blackened with smoke, as her gift. Astonishment must have been written on my face, for she asked: "Will God despise this poor *mpöji*—offering of mine? Sit down, Nkökö (Grandfather) and let me tell you why I seem so stingy."

How may one reproduce the confidences of that quavering voice, speaking Lonkundo with the accent of one who has learned it in old age? (She is a Bobangi). Three weeks before, the buffaloes had come down in a herd upon her plantations of maize and cassava, broken down the stick-fence, and trampled down all they had not eaten. A week before, her husband had forbidden her to come to the gathering at Bolenge. Although she serves Jesus, he is a heathen and she only one of many wives. She remonstrated and he set fire to her adobe hut. And in it were stored all her beautiful baskets, her shapely pottery, and her stores of dried fish, for this Angel of the Church at Mpombo is a fisherwoman, pottery-maker, and a renowned weaver of baskets. She concluded, "This *enganyu*—this worn-out basket, it is all I have. I give it in shame, but I have nothing else."

I tried to show her how acceptable her gift was, and asked her: "Ekota, is it not better that you stay here with us? Your husband is a man of violent anger, and all the Christians here love you." "No, White Man, it

will not do that way. I have planted again my garden. It will grow again, and I will build another house. Perhaps some day my husband will agree to Jesus. But whether he does or not, my work is in my own village."

"What humble hands unbar those gates of morn
Through which the splendor of the new day bursts."

That is the mystery of the Gospel—and part of the secret of the Lure of Africa.

One day it was my lot to go along one of those jungle trails of which I speak so often. The native bridges were slippery and the paths rough. But on this occasion I was happy in the fact that my wife was with me. Missionary women have few opportunities of seeing the real life of the interior, as traveling is so difficult. As we went along, we suddenly heard a big bass *lokole* behind us boom out a message, answered quickly by one as deep-voiced from the village to which we were going. Our guide burst into a laugh: "White Man, no one will run away from you to-day. The word has gone ahead that the White Woman of Jesus is coming!"

We crossed one more marsh and as we came out of its sticky blackness, the crowds from the village ahead met us. The young men and the maidens compassed us round about and sang as they escorted us to their village, their leader singing each one-line verse, and all in lusty unison on the chorus:

"This day our hearts dance,
Our White Mother has come!
Our wise men said she would come,
Our White Mother has come!
We always knew she would come,

Our White Mother has come!
Behold, we bring our White Mother,
Our White Mother has come!"

So congested did the path become that the warriors had to go ahead and make a way for us through the gathering crowds. For the news had spread, and many came from other villages. Our entrance was a triumphal march, and we were soon surrounded by hundreds of welcoming natives, the greater part of whom had never before seen a white woman. Some who came after we had gone into the house set apart for our use, fought for a peep into the doors and windows, and it seemed for a time that they would break down the flimsy walls!

After a little the people came together to hear the message. Picture if you will a great tree, whose wide-spreading branches made it a typical "palaver-tree" and you may see the temple of nature in which we worshiped. Beneath its far-flung shade was gathered a great concourse of carmine-painted natives. What an opportunity! I was just about to speak when something in the face of a young evangelist caught my attention. "What is it, Bofeko?" "I have never asked before—let me speak first to-day. This is my own town." "But I baptized you far down river at Mbökö among the Injolo." "I was born here." So most fittingly he spoke first. No other could speak with the same authority in that village.

More than once I have gotten new conceptions of the Gospel as I have heard the native preachers speak in that wonderful Lonkundo language which flows so easily from their lips—you never have to teach public speaking to those *Bankundo* people. When you have given them some idea of what the Gospel means, they themselves are able to make it plain to their own peo-

ple. Very frequently their illustrations are so fitting and so interesting, for in telling the Gospel story, they will use some of their animal stories, or some of the folk-lore of their people. This was in a village where the people had never heard the Gospel, and where he himself had been born. He commenced his message by telling them one of these folk-lore stories, and as he spoke, I noted at once that he was using the dialect of that region. Perfectly at home with all the arts of native oratory, he frequently asked his audience, *"Loloka?"* "Do you hear?" And as often as he asked, the crowd would answer in almost incredible concert, *"O! Toloka!"* "Yes! We hear!"

The story he related had, as do all their animal stories, Ulu, the tortoise, for its hero. He reminded them of how, in the legends of the long ago, the animals talked and acted as if they were people. In those legendary times, which are probably relics of remote migrations, a certain chasm, long, narrow, and deep, yawned awesomely there in the forest, and a little stream flowed in its depths. The animals were trying to get across this chasm, for they had been entrusted with the task of taking one single Word across to people, for animals had that word and people did not know it. To get across, there was just one log which had fallen from one side and was lying across it, just like a narrow bridge. Ulu, always the leader, asked for volunteers, and on his side of the chasm, each one of them was told that Word, and urged to try to take it across to the other side and tell it to the people on the other side.

The first animal to try to get across was "Nkinda," the tawny antelope, one of the bravest of them all, but a very sleepy animal. Whenever there is anyone who

is in the habit of going to sleep in church in Africa, they always say, "He is as sleepy as an *nkinda.*" So the first animal entrusted with the Word to take across to the other side, going across this great, deep chasm, on one small trunk of a tree, was this antelope. He got along pretty well at first, but—I do not know why it was, perhaps it seemed so high up—but he got sleepy. When he was only half way across, he saw where, on the trunk of the tree, there were some branches spreading out. It looked like such a nice place that he went to sleep there, and forgot all about his work. Ulu shouted: *"Joi! Joi!"* "The Word! The Word!" But Nkinda slept peacefully on.

So they decided they would have to send another animal. The volunteer this time was "Nsoji," the little gray monkey, the commonest perhaps of all the monkeys in a country where the trees are full of monkeys. Ulu warned him: "Nkinda failed to get the Word across, and it must be taken across. You must not fail." Going across a log like that, high up there, was simply play to Nsoji. He was used to swinging from the topmost branches of the tallest trees of the forest, and there was nothing he liked better than to carry the Word across. But he had just gotten across to the other side when he looked up to the branch of the tree and—well, he was ruined, for he forgot all about the Word, because he saw that it was the *befambu* season, and the tempting fruit was hanging in ripe clusters. So, instead of thinking of the Word, he climbed up the tree and commenced to eat the fruit. Did you ever think how those primitive people know how to judge which of the fruits they dare to eat and which not? It is as easy as can be. They watch and see if the monkeys eat them, and if they do, then the

people know that they can safely eat them. Nsoji failed in his mission, and on the other side all the animals got together, and Nkoi, the Leopard, chief of all, said: "We must send someone who will deliver the Word without fail. Who will volunteer to go?"

So Jibuka said, "I will go and get the Word across all right." He is a great big black monkey, black all over except his shoulders, which are white. He is perhaps the prettiest of all the monkeys. He said: "It is nothing at all to go across there. I can get across. I will deliver the Word to the people in no time. Then I will come back and tell you that I have taken it across."

But he only got half way across. Those white shoulders of his were his ruin, because there was a man hiding off there in the forest, one of those to whom the Word was being taken, though he did not know it, and when he saw the white shoulders, he drew back his bow until the arrow just pointed right at the white shoulders. Then the arrow whizzed through the air, and Jibuka fell off the tree which was being used for a bridge down to the rippling stream beneath, two hundred feet to death.

Once more the animals gathered together, and now there were no volunteers at all. The hippopotamus said: "What would be the use of me trying to go across a thing like that? Everybody knows I am too awkward." The elephant said: "I am too big." The leopard said: "I could do it easily enough, but I am your chief, and you do not want me to take any risks getting across there. Besides, I do not like this bow and arrow business. We had better give up the attempt."

Then came Ulu, the little tortoise, saying: "The

SOME WHITE CHILDREN BORN AT BOLENGE.

Word *must* go across. It has been entrusted to us. I will go." They all knew that Ulu was pretty smart, but this looked like a big undertaking, so they said: "Now Ulu, you are so little and you go so slowly, you will never get that Word across." But Ulu replied: "Never mind, you watch me."

He got started out on the tree, and those little short legs of his went paddling across. It took him a long while, but he is as sure as he is slow, and across he went. When he reached the other side, he kept the Word faithfully in mind, and went and delivered it to the human race.

When the evangelist had reached that point, a murmur of applause went through the crowd, but he asked the people: "You all know that story. Now tell me something. What was that Word that Ulu took across?"

As he asked them that, a sigh went through the crowd as the wind goes through the trees on an autumn day, because they knew that they had always been asking that very question, and their fathers had been asking, and their grandfathers before that had been asking every story teller that had come to their villages, for they had all forgotten the Word. So they said: "We have forgotten." Quickly he flashed back: "And God?" Very sadly they answered all together: "God forgot too. We forgot the Word and He forgot us."

Then the evangelist said: "No! He never forgot nor forgets. Listen to me, for I am of your own town. That Word that was taken safely across was a picture of the Word that God entrusted to His Son and told him to bring it down here to the White People and to the Black People—to all the people everywhere. That word is *Lobiko*—Salvation, Redemption."

Then you see what an opportunity he had. How those stolid faces of theirs commenced to light up with interest as he told them the wonderful story of how God sent His Son down into the world that that chasm between us and Him might be bridged.

But as his eyes flashed and his words flamed, the view before my eyes faded in kaleidoscopic fashion into another scene. It was night on the Bussira. A tornado lashed the dark waters of the river into furious waves, and the flashes of lightning were the only gleams to light our way. Fever was upon me, and I lay in the bottom of the canoe. The paddlers fought against wind and wave and rain to bring their white teacher to a village. All at once a tiny village was flashed into view by the lightning. It was Mbökö, one of the first towns to be stricken by sleeping sickness, and of its former glory only seven huts remained. I hurried to the house of the chief and found him already affected by the disease. I threw myself on the native bed in a corner, but the chief lighted up my face with a firebrand, and asked: "Is it not the Great White Chief who tells us of the love of God? Surely he is not going to sleep without speaking to us."

They threw *bontone* wood on the fire; the remnant of village life gathered—perhaps twenty-five people; the rain beat interminably upon the thatch roof; the message was given. Its special content has passed from my memory, but it was

> "The old, old story
> Of Jesus and His love."

The audience was, in some respects, an unusual one—a number of women, the half-crazed chief, his two bright-faced sons, and a slave lad, sullen and heavy of

face, seated almost beyond the ring of light thrown by the fire. But after a time, as I spoke, I found that I was speaking only to the slave boy and that his eyes shone like stars in the darkness as the fire burned lower and lower. Only in hymns does a missionary win "a nation in a day," but that day that village was won, and in the next few weeks all except the chief, who succumbed soon to the dread malady, became Christians. His two sons became preachers of note, and wield their influence in the church until this day.

And the slave lad? Ah, you have already guessed! Bofeko, yesterday a slave; the next day redeemed by Jesus Christ; to-day a bondslave of the Master of men, preaching the truth which sets men free, was the preacher of the Ulu story in his natal town. Carried away as a captive when only a boy, brought up in the household of the chief of Mbökö, he had never forgotten his own village or his own dialect. Was it any wonder that his words came with power to his people, or that they were glad as they heard, and said one to another: "We had forgotten that Word, and we thought God had forgotten us, but now we know that He has always been remembering us, and we know also now that in Christ Jesus we have found the meaning of the Word." For the Cross of Christ is God's eternal assurance to men that He never forgets.

Now do you begin to see what is the real Lure of Africa? Let me reveal it a little more. Once upon a time, an evangelist from a near-by hamlet of Ifeko brought to the mission station, to be baptized, a deaf and dumb woman. Sign language seems to be universal the world around, so her teacher interpreted my question as she made the Good Confession. After being buried with Christ, she went away with gladness

showing in her face. Three months later she came back with another woman, also deaf and dumb, and tried to tell me of her friend. But this time I had no interpreter, and all her signs were Greek to me. All at once an inspiration came to her. Leaning over, she touched my lips and then her heart, following with a motion as if of baptizing a person. Then she laughed —how gleefully she laughed! After that she touched her own lips—poor soundless lips, that had never spoken—and laid her finger in turn upon the heart of the other woman. Once more the motion of putting a candidate down into the water; once more the gleeful laugh; and it all dawned on me. She was bringing her first convert for me to baptize, that the joy she had known might also be the joy of her neighbor in affliction.

Yes, there is the winsome attraction of my Children of the Forest, and of their weird land. For in whatever dim sense they have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, they feel impelled to share that wondrous experience.

CHAPTER XIX

Mark Njoji—A Prophecy

TO know Bolenge is to know Mark Njöji. If you were to go there, his pleasant face would be one of the first to greet you when you landed at the beach, and wherever you went you would find him occupying always some important and useful place.

Mark Njöji is coming more and more to be recognized as one of the leaders in the church and among his people generally. But no man in Africa, or elsewhere, comes to such a place of prominence and of useful service without some background, and the first phase of Mark's background which is significant, is his heritage. That takes us back at once to his father, courtly old Bonkanza, for so many years the friend of the white people, and one who represented the finest ideals of the old chiefly aristocracy. Tall, finely built, and strong, his physique showed at once that he was of the family of the chiefs, and when one heard him speak at a meeting of the village council, he was recognized at once as having that moral leadership without which even the strong arm of the warrior fails utterly. His urbanity of manner also was always very characteristic of Bonkanza, and every European visitor, whether or not he could understand the hospitable words which were spoken, could read the kindly welcome in his face. Njöji was brought up by Bonkanza. The limits of

space preclude any mention of his boyhood days, save to say that he was trained as one who was to take his rightful place in the autocratic oligarchy by which primitive society in Central Africa is governed.

Soon after the mission was founded at Bolenge, he commenced to go to the day school, and was one of the first to learn to read and write. The other part of his education, that is, the native side of it, he had from his older brother, Bosekela. He was the most famous witch-doctor of that whole region near to our mission station at Bolenge. Messengers came from far and near to summon him for divinations, witch-hunts, cures, and all that goes to make up the occult side of Central African mystic and magical conceptions.

No study of the influence of leaders in Bankundo life could be made without much space being devoted to the witch-doctor. In various places in these pages his influence, especially from its religious and medical side, is described. And he requires frequent mention if his place in the village and tribal life is to be understood, for he is the most powerful personage in their social organization. We do well to keep before our mind the fact that he is the arbiter of all their life. He forms public opinion, and keeps every phase of the life of his people within his grasp. This would be more easily comprehended if all his activities and functions could be enumerated and interpreted.

Among these, his right to be the presiding officer of his secret society should not be minimized. There are at least two of these secret societies, but very little has been known of them in the past, and not much is known as yet. However, the confidence of some of the younger people has been so won that they have revealed some things regarding these societies. These

two lodges are rivals, and, to become a full member, the candidate has to take ten degrees, in each of which he must pass an examination. Some of the examinations are for proficiency in stealing, stealth in murder, skill in traducing an enemy, and others of like sort. Failure to pass any one of the examinations means that he will be seized by the lodge wardens, and held for ransom. This ransom money and the sale of stolen articles go to swell the lodge treasury.

When the secret society meets, all leave their weapons outside, except the wardens or guards, and sit in a circle, with the wardens in the center, waiting to act when the Master orders. Probably the worst thing about these societies is that they encourage superstition, and that they are bound to aid one another, even in crime. And the initiation ceremonies are so revolting that one may not even hint at them. The societies probably have some good results, in that they conserve good customs along with evil ones, and that they aid in handing on the traditions of the tribe. And the members do help one another in time of need.

One of the orders or degrees is composed of those who know the art of hewing coffins and of digging graves, along with the burial customs, and still another has in its ranks the professional mourners. Passwords, regalia, a secret vocabulary, and hair-raising oaths give these woodland lodges all the earmarks of more cultured fraternities. And no doubt the forest itself, and the weird gathering-places hidden in its depths, furnish thrills no civilized secret order could hope to attain!

In our review of Mark's native education, the most interesting thing about these primitive secret societies is that, under the guise of religion, and aided by super-

stition, they put the reins of government into the hands of a few. It may readily be understood, therefore, that Mark came of a family which wielded much influence, political, social, and religious.

For, in his profession, Bosekela attained to a prominence which men of his class seldom obtain, for he possessed real ability, and knew the psychology of his people. This enabled him to use suggestion and kindred methods in very efficient fashion. His astuteness also enabled him to keep the people docile and subservient. However, from the time the missionaries first established themselves in Bolenge, he had been very friendly to them, and because he was a man of mental acumen, he came often to talk with them regarding the new teaching of Jesus which they had brought. He continued, however, to practice his magic and kindred arts, even in the village very close to the mission. But it so happened that his favorite wife became very ill, and all his *bakunda* failed to bring her back to health. Finally, in desperation, he came to the medical missionary, who hurried out into the village, and was able to save her life. A few days after this, Bosekela came to the doctor and told him that while he would continue to exercise his profession in all that region, he would refuse after that to have anything to do with the people who lived in Bolenge village. And to the day of his death he kept that promise.

Bonkanza and Bosekela died about the same time, just as the story of Jesus was making its impress upon Mark's heart. He burned the charms and other paraphernalia which belonged to Bosekela's profession, and arranged that the wives and slaves which he had inherited should be free to choose their own lot in life.

The first missionaries who went to Bolenge found

the people willing to listen to the good news, but for three years none of them seemed to have any real personal interest in that message. But late in the year 1901, a new spirit seemed to be manifesting itself, and by the middle of 1902 that interest had grown so intense that each Sunday the little chapel was crowded with eager listeners. Finally several of them expressed a desire to become Christians, and Mark Njöji was one of the first three who were baptized, on November twenty-third of that year. The other two were Lonkoko and Iso Timothy, both of whom have had a large part in the life of the church at Bolenge.

On the fifth of March of the next year, the first church was organized, and Mark was one of the twenty-four charter members. As far as could be judged, Mark was about eighteen years old when he became a Christian, and he entered at once in a very active way into the work of the church. He went as an evangelist to a number of the districts of the Bolenge hinterland, and was one of the pioneers in the Bussira region, being located at Longa in 1906.

There he did perhaps the best work of his evangelistic service, against a good deal of opposition. It was at Longa that I first recall hearing him preach, somewhere about April, 1907. I remember that his sermon was based on Jesus' parable of the mustard seed. We had at that time only a little handful of Christians, but the interest was spreading in the surrounding villages. In his sermon, Mark predicted that in the years to come, the church at Longa would grow and increase even as did the mustard seed, until it should be a strong and flourishing congregation.

A little later in that year, it seemed wise for some young Christian man to go to the United States, to aid

in some translation work. Mark was the unanimous choice for that position, and in July started for the White Man's Land. Many who read this will recall having met him, and of hearing him trying to tell in very broken, but evidently sincere words, his desire for more missionaries to be sent to his land for the redemption of his people.

In addition to spending a good deal of time in the special work for which he came, he was for some months at the sanitarium at Battle Creek, Michigan, trying to make himself more efficient as a medical assistant when he should return to the Congo. While there he had a rather interesting experience. One day he was asked by a white man who had been in Africa to act the part of a witch-doctor. The traveler said: "I will describe the manner of a witch-doctor, and I would like for you to dance. Of course you will take off your clothes, as a witch-doctor never dances with clothes on." Mark said: "No, that can never again be fitting for me." The man begged him for two or three days, but he would not consent. Some friends asked him: "Why do you persist in refusing?" Mark answered: "Dancing is not becoming in a Christian. Was not John the Baptist killed on the day a girl danced before Herod?" They said: "This cannot be compared with that. You only show those people who do not know the manner of a witch-doctor." Mark replied: "I did not come here as a witch-doctor; as a witch-doctor I never would have reached this country." "But we will pay you." Mark replied, "No man is saved by money." The traveler tried to make it plain that he had only a scientific interest in the dancing, but Mark was obdurate.

He returned to his own land in August of 1909.

When he reached Bolenge, it soon became apparent that his usefulness was not to be especially in the medical work, as had been hoped, because his ability as a preacher and teacher soon took him away from that kind of work. Those years spent in America had been years of significant mental and spiritual growth, and he very soon evidenced striking ability as a leader of his people. During the early years of work, the church had been growing very rapidly, but at this time it was plain that it needed more organization. And as the aim of the missionaries had been, from the beginning, that that church should, as soon as possible, commence to develop its own life with the hope that some day it should become a really indigenous, self-propagating and self-governing church, at the beginning of 1912 two elders and seven deacons were chosen, and Mark was one of those elders.

In this position he showed that he had at last come into his own, for he had the real pastor's instinct and through all the years since then has striven to be a true shepherd of the flock of God. In the year 1914, because he had so signally manifested his ability as an executive as well as in other qualities of leadership, he commenced to serve as pastor of the church at Bolenge, and in 1920 was ordained to the ministry of the Word.

In that year, the Fourth of July came on Sunday. It was a day long to be remembered at Bolenge. The brick church was thronged with people from all the outstations, for it was the time when representatives of all the village congregations had gathered at the station. There seemed this day to be more fervor in the prayers, more music in the songs, more worship in the hearts, and a certain note of glad anticipation in the air. This

was explained when one glanced toward the platform, and saw a man kneeling in the center of a group of missionaries and elders of the church. It was that simple and impressive institution which has come down to us from the days of the Apostles—ordination by the laying on of hands. On this momentous occasion, we asked Mark if he wished to be ordained to the ministry of the Gospel, and in clear tones he replied that he did. Then, by the imposition of the hands of his white teachers and of his native brethren, he was set apart to that holy task in the prayer of consecration.

Now such a scene means little to many of you who read this, for you have seen elders and ministers ordained ever since you can remember. But this was our first native minister after twenty years! If you can sense what that means, you can imagine a little of the surge of joy in our hearts that day, and can understand just a little why it was difficult to keep back tears of joy. For this first man to be set apart to the Gospel ministry is a pledge and a prophecy of a day toward which we dream, when a real Congo church of Jesus Christ, with a ministry of its own sons, is to live its own life as it is led of the Son of God and His Word, and bear its own witness according to His will.

Mark Njöji is the leader of his people, and a friend alike to the missionary and to his own folks, because he knows the hearts and minds of both. One of the times when Mark shows how well he knows his people is when a *palaver* is being held. A *palaver* means anything which needs to be discussed. As might be expected, endless and innumerable disputes arise in connection with the purchase of wives in polygamy. These, with all other differences, are usually settled by a *palaver*. The elders of the town, or at least that part

of them not concerned in the matter at issue, sit as a kind of board of arbitrators. The complaining party states his case at great length and in much detail, often having in his hand a bundle of small sticks, one of which he throws into the midst of the assembly every time he makes a point. These are his notes. Then the one who represents the other side states his case, beginning with the unvarying formula, "All which that man said was lies." The people have all gathered beneath the *palaver* tree or in an open house, and get a great deal of joy out of the proceedings. One reason for this is that in it are combined many things which appear to be dear to *Bankundo* hearts, especially that trio represented by crowds, arguments, and oratory.

It would surprise those who always think of the African as eternally idle, to note that almost every man who is in attendance at this assembly, except those from out of town, has brought his work with him. Yonder one of the judges, sitting in the charmed circle of the elders, hews away at a canoe-paddle; the chief himself is a shield maker, and as he listens to the orators, one may see the black design grow in the plain raffia web of the shield he is making; the others prepare rattan ties for house-building and fish-traps, or on their sturdy legs twist cord or weave it into nets.

When the arguments have all been heard, the council of elders withdraws for a secret session. In this private meeting they are all too likely to be influenced by the *ngelo y'otso,* "brass-rods of the night," which is their idiom for a bribe. When they have arrived at a decision, they pronounce it very solemnly, and then show it picturesquely by rubbing white ashes on the winner of the case.

Mark is frequently asked to be one of the judges in

such cases, because of his family and church influence. Also, while he has renounced all rank or membership in his secret order, all know the society over which he has the potential right to preside, and this adds prestige.

He finds the *palaver* a wonderful "talking point." After stating a case from the native viewpoint, and causing his listeners to be amazed at his knowledge of native custom and law, he proceeds to state the same case most convincingly from the Christian and humanitarian point of view. He knows also the superstition which has bound his people through so many years. He knows all the arts of the witch-doctor, and all his deceits. He knows the dependence of his people upon fetish and magic and taboo and all that horde of superstitious practices.

He understands as well the motives and the ideals of the missionaries. His stay in the United States has given him some very fine memories, and his association with the missionaries has been a rich and helpful fellowship. Not long ago, in a letter, he said: "We pray always for the White Christians. Let them never forget to pray for us." So he helps to a mutual understanding between white and native leaders. They must have such an understanding as they serve a common Master, for

> "All the peoples meet in Him,
> And He makes the peoples one."

Recently a friend in Indianapolis sent Mark a bicycle to enable him to be more efficient in his oversight of the little congregations which are growing up near Bolenge, as well as in the pastoral work there. When the bicycle came, he gathered all the officers of the church together and took it to the Lord's House, and

set it apart to its evangelistic service, saying that this did not belong to him personally, but had been given to him for the sake of his ministry. So he wanted it to be set apart, as he had been. This thoughtfulness on the part of his American friend has added much to his joy in service. A number of times lately he has said: "Can any of the people out in the world have a joy to compare with mine?"

Two other quotations from his recent letters will help to indicate how he thinks:

"Nkökö, is it that since you and *Mama* see only white people about you there in *Mpoto* all the time, you have forgotten that we black people are here, and that we love you and call you to return?"

"Tell the churches in America that Congo is not nearly saved, that it is the blackest darkness here. Please translate these words, and let them read your translation. I have great desire to write letters to the churches in *Mpoto,* but I do not know to write English, and for that I have much sorrow."

We are feeling more and more that Mark may well be regarded as a prophecy of the day when more Congo leaders are to emerge from the mass. To leaven all those children of the forest with the invigorating principles of Jesus Christ is an important and never to be neglected side of our task. Yet the conviction grows on us that the production, preparation, and inspiration of Christian leaders is the other vitally important side of our task. Browning phrases it, in "Luria," perhaps too strongly, yet he points out vividly its imperativeness:

> "A people is but the attempt of many
> To rise to the completer life of one;

> And those who live as models for the mass
> Are singly of more value than they all."

Mark Njöji is a good type of that needed leadership, and a pledge of the fulfilling of that prophecy. It is the old, ever-new story. Humble, trusting men and women lift up timid hands of faith from out the crowd to touch the hem of His immaculate garment as Jesus passes by, and cleansing and healing and power come to them. Then in God's program they carry on His work and uprear the walls of His church.

CHAPTER XX

The Soul of My Jungle Folk

IMAGINE an African forest. Picture, if you can, a little clearing in that forest. Now let your imagination build therein a village of bamboo huts and people it with *Bankundo*. Then look well upon the green walls which encircle and shut in this hamlet and its life—walls of eternal, never-ending forest. Now you may realize that I am talking to you of a people with no historical background or stimulating contacts. No past have they, save in oral legend, folklore, and proverb. None of the richness of Egypt or of Greece ever flowed into their life. Not a single book or picture or magazine comes to them with awakening touch. In isolation far from splendid this tribe has lived its preliterate life.

Now the rôle of an interpreter implies more than that he tell you how a people live, or give you descriptions of their customs. He ought, if it be at all possible, to show you their souls—to let you know what they are.

Above all else let no one delude you into thinking that they do not have any mental life. Without doubt they do not think just as we think, and their logical sequences seem very illogical to us. But we should not be too surprised to find that many of their ways of looking at things are as different from ours as is the

color of their faces. For there is a "Bantu psychology," however difficult it be for a white man to get at "the back of the black man's mind." The quaint idioms of their language give queer turns to even quainter conceits. Add to this their dearth of our esthetic sense, and you will not be too surprised at some of their sayings.

Having very few domestic animals, they have to depend largely on wild meat and fish. This means a precarious supply. As preservation of food is difficult in such a climate, their meat is often "too ripe." In fact, they will calmly tell you that it is better so—that fresh meat is not nearly so tender nor of such rich flavor. Often my civilized nostrils have been offended by their putrid food, and I have asked them: "How can you eat such vile-smelling meat?" Almost invariably the reply is: "White Man, we don't eat the smell, we eat the meat!"

On the other hand, some of their rather original ways of expressing things are really beautiful. Theirs is a simple, direct language, with but few poetical turns, but once in a while one finds an expression which is as refreshing as "roses in December." For instance, in Lonkundo if one wishes to tell of so prosaic a thing as having kicked some one, he expresses it in this picturesque phrase: "I stabbed him with a foot-print!"

Always when a man is near to death, particularly a chief or head of a family, there comes the solemn moment when the dying man summons all his relatives to come and hear him *"cika boango"*—"leave his parting wish." And this last request is one of the few things held sacred in that pagan life. Very fittingly the Christians have taken this conception over into their new life, and often speak of the Communion Service as the

"Boango boki Nkolo Yesu"—"The parting wish of the Lord Jesus."

Somehow these little flashes speak to me, not only of souls hungry for beauty, but of unknown capacities for the rich and wonderful things our Christian civilization has in store for them. For while our task is primarily to reveal Jesus to them, we are also in His program to pour into their starved souls all that He has inspired of truth and goodness and beauty.

Looking at these Jungle Folk of mine from the standpoint of mental processes, nothing is more revealing than their unwritten literature. Hidden away in forest and jungle, without contacts, they have nevertheless an oral literature stored in memory libraries—pithy proverbs with point and sting; folklore rich in observation of animal life; legends of migration and of conquest; these are indisputable evidence of creative instinct.

You will already have read, on other pages, some of the folklore stories. Here I have thought it well to quote a few of their proverbs, which speak for themselves of keen observation of human nature, as well as a certain philosophy of life. Nor will one fail to discern in them some forest ethics.

Take this one, as an example: *"Nsombo ntacimelaka webi benkufu."*—"The wild-pig never digs up sweet manioc roots for his fellow." How obvious the moral is! The wild-pig does not do that because he is an animal and a pig, but human codes of helpfulness are different.

And this one, which illustrates a thing already mentioned—the lack of our esthetics: *"Jiso jolela, jolo jöföla"*—"When the eye cries, the nose runs." At least that is good physiology—and it is a mighty handy

way of showing the inter-relation of so many things!

Or another: *"Iko'tuka, bësöf'ololo"*—"The porcupine is fine to eat, but its entrails are bitter." Every child who hears it knows that the person who speaks fair words and thinks otherwise, is violating their moral code.

"Wangano ntuwumba jinko, ikoko kamb'olemo."—"Denying never cut down a plantain; it is a knife which does the work." How absurd for one to deny a wicked act when the evidence shows so conclusively that he is the guilty party!

"Botema ntakendaka l'onto"—"A man's heart ought not to go with him." Of course not! For the heart is the seat of the desires, and everything that he sees his heart will want.

"Ntainaka loola"—"No one ever hates the heavens." A certain woman took a vow never to look on the heavens again. But every time she went out of the house, she was compelled to look at the sky!

"Otabwe bolo, tosëkake etumbi"—"You haven't yet lost your vigor, do not laugh at any cripple." This proverb needs no application.

"Bomwa bofita nganji"—"The mouth ruins the present." How easily they may grasp the idea that ill-considered words take all the joy out of giving, both for the giver and for the receiver.

"Tolenana ngoki wato efekele"—"We part in the same manner as does the canoe with the stump of the tree from which it was hewn." For they never meet again. Is there not the germ of poetic instinct in this?

"The wet season never lacks sunshine; the dry season never lacks rain; neither does any marriage lack its troubles." That speaks of homely wisdom as well as giving evidence of keen observation.

One of the commonest impressions which people in more cultured lands have of my people is of them living in comparative idleness, light-hearted and carefree. And often there is that about the child of the Forest which gives some reason for such a conception. He does laugh easily and often. The *Bankundo* speak of themselves as "Children of Laughter." And there is absolutely nothing more delightful than to see and hear a bevy of chocolate-colored children playing on a sandbank in the river on a hot day. What need have they of bathing suits? And how gleefully they shout and laugh and dive and splash! But one who really knows his people has learned that frequently when a man smiles and shows his white teeth in the fire-light, it is with the pang of fear in his heart. More than once have I seen a man stop abruptly in the sensuous rhythm of a dance, and commence to throw blazing firebrands out into the darkness. Why? Because demons waited out yonder for him, and no amount of abandon to even so pleasurable a thing as a dance could drive them from his mind.

Perhaps more than for any other reason it is because they are nearly always singing that my Jungle Folk have been thought of as the "happy, laughing heathen." How they do love to sing! At work and at play; when they dance and when they go to battle; paddling a canoe or hewing a coffin—always a song. Singing seems their one art-expression. And one who passes casually through their land might easily carry away the impression of an eternally light-hearted people. But to the one who knows the soul of his people and their language, their singing tells a far different story.

More than once, as the paddlers of my canoe sang

lustily as they paddled, and seemed so joyous as the dugout shot through the water, it came almost as a shock to realize that the words of their antiphonal song ran something like this:

Leader—"The Boi-Loi came with a great attack,"
Chorus—"They hewed my father in two halves!"
Leader—"They threw my mother's body in the river,"
Chorus—"They hewed my father in two halves!"
Leader—"They sold my sister to the Arabs,"
Chorus—"They hewed my father in two halves!"
Leader—"They cut their tribal marks over my own,"
Chorus—"They hewed my father in two halves!"

For those children of mine sing their every emotion—sing not only their happiness, but their despair and their sorrow. And in their sad land they sing far too often of their grief. No wonder even the tunes of their songs have always in them a minor strain, leaving the hearer a haunting melancholy. One of their own great race bears witness to this:

"The wail of the old melodies and the plaintive quality that is ever present in the Negro voice are but the reflection of a background of tragedy. No race can rise to the heights of art until it has yearned and suffered. . . . There is something very elemental about the heart of the race, something that finds its origin in the African forest, in the sighing of the night-wind, and in the falling of the stars. There is something grim and stern about it all, too, something that speaks of the lash, of the child torn from its mother's bosom, of the dead body riddled with bullets and swinging all night from a limb by the roadside." *

But because there is this tragic note in all their emotional expressions, may we not take it as a token that

* "The Negro in Literature and Art," by Benjamin Brawley, p. 7-8.

their hearts have therefore an infinite capacity for joy?

Among my African friends I always include the Great River—the Congo—flowing so companionably there in front of our home. How sleepily its coffee-colored waters appear to move along, its depth and current and power all hidden in its calmness. But a black cloud comes down across the Equator, and a tornado lashes its dark waters into fury. The friend of the forest children becomes their enemy, the canoes scud for safety, the backs of the paddlers bending swift and strong; some reach the shore—and some fail. Then in a few hours the sun shines again; one sees only a little foam, and perhaps some wreckage.

My friends, that is a picture of the souls of my Jungle Folk. How stolid and impassive and uninteresting, and even sullen they often look. The glow of the inner fire and the mobility of face, so characteristic of abounding life, which we see in the countenances of our friends here—one seldom sees anything akin to that, yonder in the forest. But let something happen—and something always does happen among the *Bankundo*—and their yesterdays leap into being, and all their past has a resurgence. And what an unlovely past it evidently was!

For the springs of life have been touched. Every proclaimer of the Gospel among such a people realizes sooner or later than he is using a dynamic dynamite, and that the "foolishness of preaching" dare not mean "foolish preaching." Those sleeping souls await the awakening touch; it is for us to make sure that the hand of Jesus touches them in the outreach of His message and life.

During my first year in the Congo, it fell to my

lot to take a long canoe trip up the Bussira River. Late one night, because of signs of an approaching storm, we landed on a large sand-bank. The storm passed over, but there was no village near, so it seemed wise to spend the night on the sand-bar. Contrary to the advice of the paddlers, I insisted on having my camp-cot set up near the waters' edge. Being very weary, I fell asleep at once.

When I awakened the first thing which greeted my eyes was a lad named Iyokonsombo, sitting on the sand between my cot and the water, a rifle across his knees. Questioning brought out the fact that, unbidden, and after having paddled the canoe all day, he had spent the night there. When asked why, he simply said that he had been protecting his white man from danger. When a crocodile came near, it was frightened away. When the night became cooler, and the young missionary tossed restlessly in his sleep, Iyokonsombo spread another blanket over him.

Quite possibly there was no real danger that night, but that incident is highly indicative of *Bankundo* character. No other one characteristic of those Forest Children is more marked or shows itself in so many beautiful expressions as in *personal loyalty*. There are few who can readily be tied to an institution or a principle, but to the white person to whom he has given his heart's best allegiance, the native will be loyal through almost any vicissitude. The incident related above could be duplicated over and over again in some form in the experience of nearly every traveler, merchant, or official, as well as that of the missionary. Dare we not, then, very reverently use this one marked attribute of their souls as we strive to win primitive peoples to the Friend who faileth never? They may

TYPES OF YOUNG CHRISTIAN MEN, ONE A PRINTER,
THE OTHER A STEAMER PILOT, BOTH ARE PREACHERS ALSO.

not understand in the beginning very much of the breadth and depth of the religion of Jesus, but if they come to know Him as He is, their loyal souls will give to Him a fine and unswerving allegiance.

But the really perennial question is nearly always, "Are your people lazy?" Now at first sight, the African does often seem to be lazy. Especially is this true of the *Bankundo* man. The newly arrived missionary or casual visitor sees him often sitting or lolling in the shade. He seems never to have much to do. The women are less often accused of laziness, for the heavier burdens of life fall often on them. You cannot go through the manioc and maize gardens which surround each village without seeing them bending over at their task, working with short-handled hoe or rude knife. When the evening time comes, and the sun goes down promptly at six o'clock, you see the women cooking the food they have raised in their gardens, in pots they themselves have made, with wood they have themselves gathered, and then carrying it to their husbands that they may eat first, for no woman could ever eat at the same time as a man.

Yet we must not be unjust to the Equatorial man. He did clear the ground where his wives made their gardens. He did make the crude tools with which they labor, having first dug the iron ore and smelted a reasonably pure metal. He built, with hopelessly inadequate tools which he had also made, a house for each of his wives, for even in his ignorance he knows better than to put two wives in one house.

And one must take into account another part of his life. No criticism of the African man is heard more frequently than that he spends the larger part of his time in fishing and hunting. And if one were to judge

hastily, that does seem to be an indolent way of spending one's life. But there is a vast difference between fishing and hunting for recreation, and doing these same things to keep hunger away. Few occupations require more energy and patience, as well as skill, or entail more exposure, than that of the professional hunter or fisher, or have much more chance of failure. So when that casual visitor passed through a village and saw a certain native asleep on a mat for long hours, and judged him lazy, it was because he did not know that the sleeper was a fisherman, that he was just back from a two months' fishing trip, and that he was trying to make up a little of the much sleep he had lost. When all the nets, traps, and weapons for the chase and fishing have to be made by hand, that is another story also. Some of the canoes in which he goes to his pursuits will hold a hundred people.

Yet the Gospel of Industry does need in an imperative way to be proclaimed to the men and women of Africa, and this new evangel is being emphasized by nearly every mission. But climatic conditions cannot be ignored. The white man who expects a native of a tropical land to work as hard and as many hours in that land as a native of the temperate zone works in his land, needs his reasoning faculties adjusted.

Some needs are imperative. Perhaps the primary one is to dignify manual labor, and especially agriculture, and to inculcate the habit of regular, sustained labor. For the real vice of the child of the tropics is not so much laziness as spasmodic application to toil. The raising of Irish potatoes for white people has helped to dignify agriculture.

Next in order of importance comes the fitting of new tools to hands already used to toil. No service

the missionary renders in the way of material things is greater than this. For in the long ago they had so few tools, and those few are so inadequate for their new industrial life. So the ministry of providing the saw and the hammer and the plane and the modern hoe and the pick and the trowel and the grindstone and the sewing-machine and the printing-press is a most helpful one.

For we must not forget that the Gospel has a message for the life that now is. The Gospel which enlightens a soul makes him crave different living conditions. So the new Africa which is coming into being is requiring a very army of carpenters and masons and tailors and farmers and builders.

One problem looms large. That is the question of power. There are no beasts of burden in equatorial Africa, nor does it seem possible for them to live there. That means that there is no bridging of the gap between man-power and mechanical power. Man-power alone seems inadequate to develop a real agricultural life, so tractors seem an absolute necessity. The soil must really be turned up if its productive richness is to be turned loose. A tractor, with plow, harrow, and stump-puller, is therefore one of the present imperative requirements.

No better tribute could be paid to the industrial training which has been given by our missionaries than the simple fact that every man or boy in training has a position waiting for him long before he is ready for it.

Given better mechanical equipment for our industrial missionaries, better facilities for furnishing trained students with tools—for which they will gladly pay, more agriculturists to teach scientific agriculture, which

will be attractive to men and make a stronger race, Africa's long future looks far more happy. But there is an essential prerequisite to any progress in these respects.

May I take you with me on one more forest journey? We white folks walk without burdens, for it is difficult enough for one alien to those jungle trails to get along even unhampered. Our porters, each bearing about a fifty pound load, carry our baggage for us. We wade several streams, some of them waist deep, but find their cool waters refreshing. But the swamps, the real *nkaji,* with their soft, slimy mud, how we detest them. Each time we come out on a firm forest path we quicken our pace in the friendly shade. We stop only a short time at noon, as our goal is a large village far ahead. The afternoon drags out its long hours; the heat grows intense and our footsteps lag; the porters, with streams of perspiration running down in furrows in the mud which stains their dark bodies, begin to grumble; hunger and a great weariness is upon them. Somehow we encourage them, and a half hour after sunset they throw their burdens down in the chief's *bongombo,* and themselves upon the *beanga* by the fire. We have purchased food for them, but to-night they are too tired to talk, and eat in as near silence as is ever possible for them.

We go to bed. All at once a *lokole* is beaten. The few voices of our porters are hushed. Then we hear the *ngömö* drum begin, and know that a dance is going on. We are so weary that we think we can go to sleep in spite of drum, hand claps, or songs. But the dance is too near, so I call to one of the porters to go to the chief's house, and say that his white men

cannot sleep because of the noise. No answer. Repeated calls. Still no answer. For all the porters are in the whirl of the dance! They will work all day and dance all night. For that matter, I understand that many here will do the same thing—and dance the same dances!

What I am trying to say is that my Jungle Folk are little different from other folks in every land. Awaken their interest, convince their hearts that a thing is worth working for, and nearly all problems vanish, "for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also."

Somehow there is in every soul an eternal wistfulness to be understood. And in every clime men and women and little children recognize that the tender world-heart of Jesus will understand.

"I could not do without Thee,
No other friend can read
The spirit's strange, deep longings,
Interpreting its need;
No human heart could enter
Each dim recess of mine,
And soothe and hush and calm it,
O blessed Lord, like Thine."

"Thinking Black"—what a message to all of us missionaries all over this land! To approach every question as those who are to lead would approach it; to formulate every burning message so that it finds approach to black hearts; to enter into sympathy with every trial which leads a black spirit into its Gethsemane; what could be more wonderful for a leader of a native church to accomplish than this? He would be "Thinking Black" with a mind cultured and purified in the white things of progress; he would be preach-

ing "Black" with a white-hot message which blazes its way into the hidden chambers of men's souls; Aye—he would be doing the real work of an evangelist—he would be a true Shepherd of the Sheep.

CHAPTER XXI

The Hands Outstretched from the Forest

MY friends, as it is given to me to tell you of my people, I am thinking of a verse from the Old Testament. It rings with the prophetic note, and is found in the sixty-eighth Psalm, the thirty-first verse:

"Ethiopia shall haste to stretch out her hands unto God."

It is of part of Ethiopia that we are thinking together. If you see it and its people in some small measure through my eyes, I will be content.

If we could imagine ourselves in an aeroplane, looking down on the central part of that great continent, we might, I am sure, gain a conception of the problem of winning the Congo Basin for King Jesus, which it would be difficult for us to conceive of otherwise.

When you first look down upon this part of Africa, I think you will find it like a great bowl, flat in the bottom; and as you look at the bottom of that mighty bowl, it will seem almost dark to you in the beginning, for this land of Africa has been well named, "The Dark Continent." Then, as you look a little longer, you will see what looks like a great silver snake, and as you look still closer, you will realize that that is the great Congo River, the main artery of the land. Spreading out from it everywhere are other great rivers, its tributaries, which are as large as some of the rivers of our own land.

Then, looking a little closer, you will see in the midst of that which seems entirely black, some lighter spots. If your machine should come a little lower and nearer to the tops of the trees, then you would realize that each one of these light spots is a little clearing there in the forest. Could you look still closer, you would see what seem to be tiny threads going between these little clearings, and eventually you would realize that these people of mine live there in small villages, each one in its own little clearing in the heart of that great equatorial woodland, and that those silver threads are footpaths which bind together in some fashion these forest villages.

When you have seen a picture like that, one need not tell you that my *Bankundo* are very backward; that they have no contacts with civilization; and if we were to visit one of those villages, we would find the people living in the most primitive fashion. The village usually consists of only one street, with two rows of bamboo huts facing each other across that street. If you were to go inside one of those houses, you would not find anything very much which would seem to you to go to make up a home. And yet, in such isolation, and in that kind of dwellings, the whole life of these people is passed.

But, after all, it is not the houses of the people, I think, in which we are chiefly interested, but the people themselves. If you were to go into one of these villages, and the people would come gathering about you, as they would be sure to do, you would not be very much attracted to them in the beginning. The red paint with which they are covered does not make them any more attractive. And not finding any other way of ornamenting themselves, the "Artist in Blood" has

carved many designs on their bodies. No doubt, at first glance, these people would seem to you repulsive, and there is very much in their lives which is repugnant. Cruelty seems to be an inherent quality of their character, and you will find many examples of that cruelty cropping out as you come to know their intimate life.

No one can know African pagan life until he live in its midst; until he breathe its atmosphere, and smell its stench, and sense its horrors. But when you know a little of its life as it really is, no doubt your first impulse will be to say: "Well, those people must be so degraded that it really does not seem worth while striving to bring anything to them from the outside world; it really isn't any use trying to teach them anything of the good and the true and the beautiful."

How well I remember the day I stood for the first time among my people. A group of about eighty Christians welcomed me heartily, but I understood none of their gracious words, and one chocolate brown face looked just like any other. And those painted heathen —how they challenged all the youthful confidence of a young heart!

Fifteen years rolled by, and if you have ever wondered if the Gospel really does change people, I wish you could have been with me that day when we had to part from our people there at Bolenge. When they heard the steamer whistle, and knew that their teachers were going back to America, they came in great crowds from everywhere; until, when we came down to go on the steamer, the beach was simply covered with a great crowd of Christians. When we went down the hill and stood on the beach and uncovered our heads, we all said together in that wonderful, musical language of theirs, the Mizpah Benediction: "The Lord watch

between me and thee, while we are absent, one from another."

Then we went on board the steamer, and the captain blew the whistle and the big steamer commenced to swing out into the current. As it did so, they commenced to sing in their rhythmic language that song which is always sad in any language, or under any circumstances, "God Be With You Till We Meet Again." And I can hear again the words of that song which floated out over the waters to the steamer:

"Yawe Fafa otobatele
Enjiman'iso endoko,
Otokite nda bij'uma,
Otokits'iso la nguy'eke.
O l'o is'enana lobi nk'eko,
Fafa otobatele;
O l'o is'enana lobi nk'eko,
Faf'ekiso otobatele."

Across the seas I can see the faces of my people as I saw them that last day, the tears running down their cheeks, because their teachers were going from them.

The song was ended, the steamer was out in mid-stream, turning now down stream just ready to go ahead at full speed, when the pastor of our native church shouted out, his voice carrying across the water: *"Bendele, balaki bakiso, lokendaka o wai, la nda jina ja Yesu. Temongake ejinge, ko a iny'oya, loyela balaki buke l'inyo."*—"White people, white teachers of ours, go in peace, and in the name of Jesus. Do not stay long, and when you come back bring lots of teachers with you."

For those who gathered that day were those who had been won from among people who seemed so brutal when one first saw them, whose faces were so stolid,

who appeared so unapproachable; and those eight hundred believers who gathered there that day were only a tenth of the membership of our churches in Congoland.

May I show you the most wonderful experience which may possibly come to an ambassador of King Jesus? Once I went in a canoe on a journey in that land of the Congo. We went for two hours up the main river, and then turned off on the Bussira, and were for ten days on that river. Day after day we journeyed in an open dug-out canoe; day after day those dusky paddlers sent their paddles deeper and deeper into the water, because the currents of those rivers are far stronger than they seem; day after day the boy was beating the drum in the bow of the canoe—that everlasting tom-tom upon the wooden drum—they cannot paddle without it. They have to have that drum and the singing which goes with it. All day long it keeps time for the paddlers, and I want to assure you that if that equatorial sun beating down upon your head and reflecting from the water is not enough to give you the choicest headache you ever had in your life, then you want to try listening all day long to the tom, tom, tom, tom of that drum. It never stops, for when it ceases, the canoe stops.

But there is another reason why they always beat that drum. That is because this is a land where, as I have told you before, war is the regular and the normal thing. It is the thing which they expect to happen anytime, and every man who does not belong to your tribe or your family is a potential enemy. So one of the reasons for the drum is to let you know that this is a peaceful canoe coming. Whenever one happens to be looking down the river and sees a canoe gliding

along quietly and close to the bank, he immediately goes to the great war drum and sends out the message of warning, because he knows that this stealthy canoe must be a war canoe. So we always heralded our approach. This was especially necessary in our case, because in this region there were practically no white people, and no missionary of Jesus had ever gone there, so the people were very much afraid of white faces. We came to many villages where we saw the people gathered together on the bank watching us, but as soon as they saw the canoe turn in their direction they ran away, and it was impossible to get them back again to listen to the story which we had brought.

But one day about noon we came around a bend very quickly, and found ourselves in a little bay of the river. We came almost instantly upon a little village there of about a dozen huts of the rudest kind, with perhaps forty-five or fifty people. We landed so quickly that they did not have time to run away, so they came down to the river bank, the chief leading them. He gave me the greeting due to a chief of high rank, and said: "White Man, there are only a few of us here, but if there is anything we can do for you, we want to do it." It was evident that he was very much frightened.

We landed and talked with him and his people a little while, and had the satisfaction of seeing their fears grow less. After a time, the chief said: "Now, White Man, what is it you want to buy here—rubber, or ivory, or copal? Because this is not our real village—it is a long distance back here in the forest. We come down here every year at this season, but we only stay a short time. We try to catch enough fish to last us

through the season when we cannot get any. So we have nothing to sell here." I said to him: "Now ask your people to come and sit down under a tree, and I will tell them why I came to their village today."

They sat down in that semi-circle so characteristic of an African audience, and I said to them: "Who created the world?" Another thing most characteristic of an audience of this kind is the ability of a whole crowd to answer in unison, and they said immediately, *"Nzakomba"*—"God." Then I asked them that other question not so easy for them to answer: "But where is God?" With that same unison they answered all together: *"Bondele, iso tofea."* "White Man, we do not know."

Then you may see what an opportunity there was of telling them why we came. The saddest thing I think one ever hears from African lips is what they have told me so many times about God, and which they told me again that day. They say: "God created the world and the trees and the rivers, and everything that is here, and He created us, and then went away and forgot us." I told them how the God whom they thought had forgotten them, but who loved them, had seen all the world down here in its sorrow and in its weariness and in its sin, and had sent to them His only Son; and when, in speaking about God, instead of using the word *Nzakomba,* I used the word *Fafa,* meaning "Father," I saw in those dull faces the first glimpse of the light. I told them how Jesus came here and went about everywhere doing good, and I would not have time to sketch all that I told them, but finally I told them how that wicked men with cruel hands had slain Him on the Cross. And what a picture it is!

"Torture of body, loneliness of soul;
Hated, despised, the Father's face enveiled,
Fighting the bitter fight alone, alone,
While priest and people at his sufferings railed;
Dire was the pain of Calvary that day,
When Jesus breathed his anguished life away."

All because God had permitted him to die for all the people of the world everywhere. Then the light went out of their faces. I heard them whisper that plaintive expression of theirs which they always use when death or sorrow has come to them, calling on their mother: *"Ngoya aye! Ngoya aye!"* Then through the crowd went another whisper: *"O nd'elökë ekiso! Nd'elökö ea bebe bekiso!"* "It must have been on our account, and on account of our sins that he died."

But when they learned that the Cross was reared on Calvary's Mount because the great Father always loves, and that it was and is an eternal assurance that He never forgot or forgets, then all was changed. How many times one is tempted to tell them how the Church has forgotten—and forgets!

No man dares to speak to an audience like that and leave the Son of Man in the grave. So I told them how God's Son could not be held by the bonds of the grave, but had arisen from the dead; and once more the light came back into their faces. But the light did not break again in its fullness until I had told them that the reason I was there in their village that day and the reason we were journeying up those mighty rivers of theirs, stopping at each town, was that we should tell them that this Father and this Jesus Savior belong not alone to the white people, but to them also. With that word the apathy and stolidity went out of

their faces, because they commenced to know something of what Jesus might mean to them.

Then I knew that I had at last entered into the Land of Heart's Desire. For this is the ever recurring wonder of the centuries—the most wonderful of all the wonderful experiences the King of Beauty accords to those who serve Him—to watch the first, the very, very first beams of light break in people's faces as they learn of God in Christ Jesus for the first time. O wondrous grace of the Father, that men and women should know this joy, which angels never can know!

One night we gathered in the little low palm-thatched church for a rally. Fifty of the evangelists who had been sent out by the native congregation into the "Regions Beyond" had returned to report progress. In addition, more than two hundred members of that church, who had been scattered in dozens of distant villages, a few only in each hamlet, had come back for the heartening fellowship of the larger body. How I wish you might have heard a few of the reports of those untaught preachers of the jungle!

First arose one bashful and slow of speech—Efoloko, the pioneer of the Momboyo River. How he forgets his timidity, and how eloquent he grows as he tells us of what God has wrought in that frontier district! As we listened to his narrative, we seemed to be carried back to Antioch, and remembered how the church there had "glorified God," when that "little Jew of Tarsus" came back to tell of the conquests of the Cross among the Gentiles. Then a great hush came over the vast throng, as he told of how they had penetrated far into the interior, into the towns where no government officer would dare to enter, save with a large number of soldiers. How one's heart glowed as he narrated how by

the thunder of the great war drums the hideously painted and scarified chiefs had gathered together their war-loving people to hear the message of this King of Peace.

Next to him came Iso Timothy, tall and straight as a tree of his own forest. Lonkundo speech flows from his lips as water babbles over the mountain rocks, so why should I tell you how they listened? Had one dared to whisper, he could have been heard in the still silence all over the house.

After him came Efampolo, but he had no story of his own deeds, but of a "Scattered Disciple" whom he had met. Seven days' journey in the interior is the town of Bongale, and once some Bolenge evangelists preached there. The only one to heed was Bosamb'-aende. And to this day in that village they tell of his cruel and vile deeds. To Bolenge he came, but not to the mission station only. He came to God's Son, and in Him found a wondrous salvation. How the touch of the Master moulded even his features! To talk with him was to glow again with the apostolic spirit, unless it be that he spoke softly of the deep things of the Spirit, and you wandered together into the Holy of Holies. Then back to his own town, his face aglow as he thought of how he should tell his loved ones and friends of this joy, almost too good to be true.

But God's ways are beyond our knowing, and it seemed His will that this new-born one should fall sick by the way, and have to be carried home to die. So never did his dream of telling his eloquent story come true, except in the feeble speech of one who lingers yet a little on this side of the river. Thirty miles from the nearest Christian and a hundred miles from a doctor, Bosamb'aende lay tied to a rough bed in a low mud

house, but clinging ever to the faith, and never ceasing in his burning fever to bear testimony to his Jesus. So the evangelist found him one day, and wondered much at the joy in his face. And this was the dream he told.

It seemed that a few days before, all his relatives had been sneering and ridiculing even worse than usual, and had asked: "Where is this Savior of yours? Why does He not come to see you now?" That night he fell asleep with a heavy heart, but as he slept, it seemed that the Master Himself entered the dark little hut, and it all became light with His presence. Then He said: "Bosambe, do you really believe that I have forgotten you? No, it cannot be. Always when man cannot see, then your Father and I are always with you." "Now," said he, "I do not mind their jeers, or even the pain. I am ready to wait and see what He wills for me."

Out in that mass of heathenism that one little life seems lost, but some lives are writ

> ". . . in phosphorescent glory,
> Only legible by night."

As out from that missionary gathering those dusky Christians went to rest, one had the sure conviction that the Mystic Comrade walked with many of them.

But I could not close this chapter, friends, without telling you in just a moment of the millions who sit there in the darkness and in the shadow of death; of Ethiopia, stretching out her hands unto God. Once, when the missionaries went to the village of Monieka, where now we have a mission station, they wanted the people all to gather together so that they should hear the first proclamation of the good news of salvation as it is

in Christ Jesus our Lord. To make sure the people would understand, they took with them their stereopticon and colored slides of the life of Christ. The stereopticon did not amount to very much—it only burned kerosene, because there in that forest any other sort of illumination is impossible. But the slides were really very fine, having been made from the old Masters. Because, in a land like that, where the only buildings are those little bamboo huts, every gathering of any importance has to be held outdoors, they gathered to see these slides in this fashion. The missionaries stretched a sheet between two trees, and then commenced to throw the colored slides one after another upon it.

At first the people were afraid. The beautiful pictures seemed almost too wonderful; but curiosity overcame their fear, and before long the whole village was seated on the ground in front of the sheet, watching those wonderful pictures and listening to the story of the life of Him who came down here as a little babe, and went about everywhere doing good, and who gave His life for the children of men.

Among those who gathered that night was an old chief of the town. He had once been the one upon whom they all depended to lead them in battle against their enemies; but now he was old and cast out, and a younger man put in his place, because there might is the only authority, and no strength remained in his withered arms. He was now almost blind, and very feeble. He sat on the front row that night, and of all who listened, no one was more attentive than he, or regarded more fixedly those pictures of the Son of Man here among the children of men.

After a while the meeting was over; the people

melted away to their homes; the missionaries went to sleep in the hut which had been assigned to them. The next morning, when they came out, the first thing they saw was this old man standing there in front of that sheet, which had been left all night stretched between the trees. He was feeling all over the surface of that sheet, as sometimes a blind man gropes for a familiar face. The missionaries were surprised, and asked him: "Bolingo, what are you doing there?" Continuing his search, he said: "I am looking for Jesus. He was here last night, and I saw Him just as plain as could be, but I cannot find Him now."

Friends, that is a picture of the heart of Africa, stretching out its hands unto God, unable to find Jesus, because not yet has the church given to Ethiopia the story of Jesus. But some good day the nail-pierced hands of the Son of God are to grasp all so firmly and tenderly those hands outstretched from the jungle and the forest.

Epilogue

THAT land of the Congo—have you been able in any sense to see it as it is?

The land of the noiseless footfall, where its children with unshod feet move without sound in its forests. Stealthy foes move swiftly and silently within those leafy glades.

The land of the hidden villages—along the jungle-paths which join them go no vehicles of modern invention. Long ago the marshes and the isolation joined hands to hold life stagnant and static.

The land of disintegration—of rotting wood and crumbling bricks, of rusting iron and moldy books—decaying beneath its exotic beauty. Let the white man and the black alike beware its insidious undermining. Health and character are both perilous possessions yonder where the Congo flows!

The land of darkness and of the shadow of death. Fearful creatures of the imagination wind their weird way along its trails, and life is one long, sleepless anxiety. Who will dare to compute the price of its redemption?

And yet a land of sunshine and of immortal hope. For in this, the country of my adoption, the years are proving that the Children of the Forest are eager for the "Jesus Story." Superstition, unspeakable selfishness, polygamy, cannibalism, slavery, and the other evils of heathendom, nameable and nameless, still abide yonder on the Equator, but not as in the old days. Once

in all those villages nestling in the forest depths, those children of mine dwelt literally in the darkness and the shadow of death fell often across the rude doorways of their huts. Cruelty reigned and blood flowed often, because hate abode with them. They groped after God and found Him not. But now Jesus has come to show them the Father, and His name begins to be heard often in the jungle, and the songs of the redeemed make softer music than the forest was wont to know. So those villages will never again be the same. Not as in the long ago will they torture little children; womanhood is coming into her own, surely though also slowly; homes are commencing to be; the little churches make bright communities among the still darkened ones. For some of the Children of the Forest are becoming the Children of God.

How wonderfully the Mystic Comrade calls us on to larger dreams for this land of His! By the sacrifices of those who sleep beneath the palms; by the outstretched hands of those who know not the glory of His countenance; by the faith and deeds of the hosts won out of heathenism; by all these He tells us that *now* is *His* day in Congoland. We dare not, we cannot fail Him.

"I know of a land that is sunk in shame,
Of hearts that faint and tire;
And I know a Name, a Name, a Name,
That can set that land on fire.
Its sound is a brand,
Its letters a flame,
I know a Name, a Name, a Name,
That can set that land on fire."

THE END

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